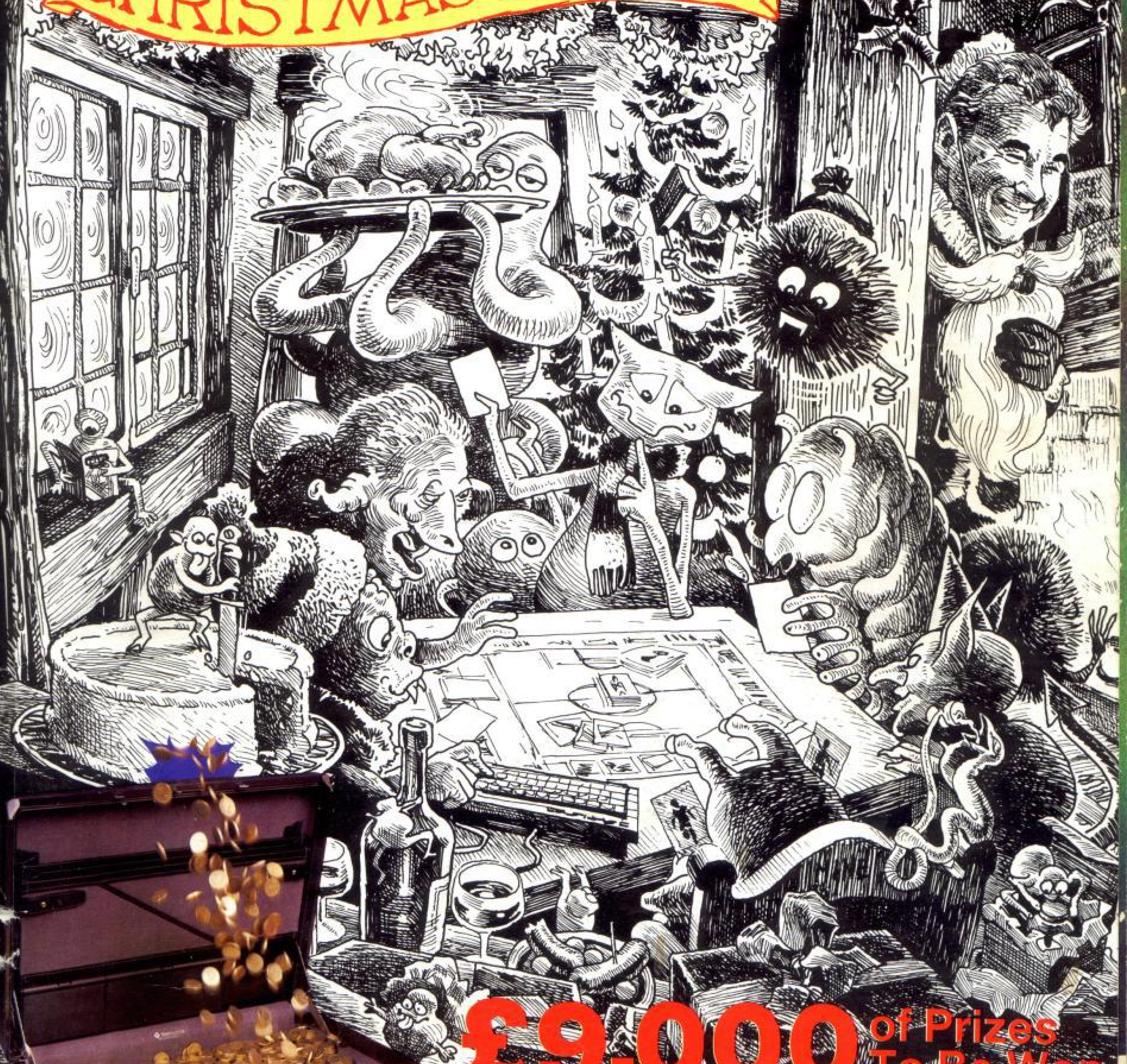
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# CRASH

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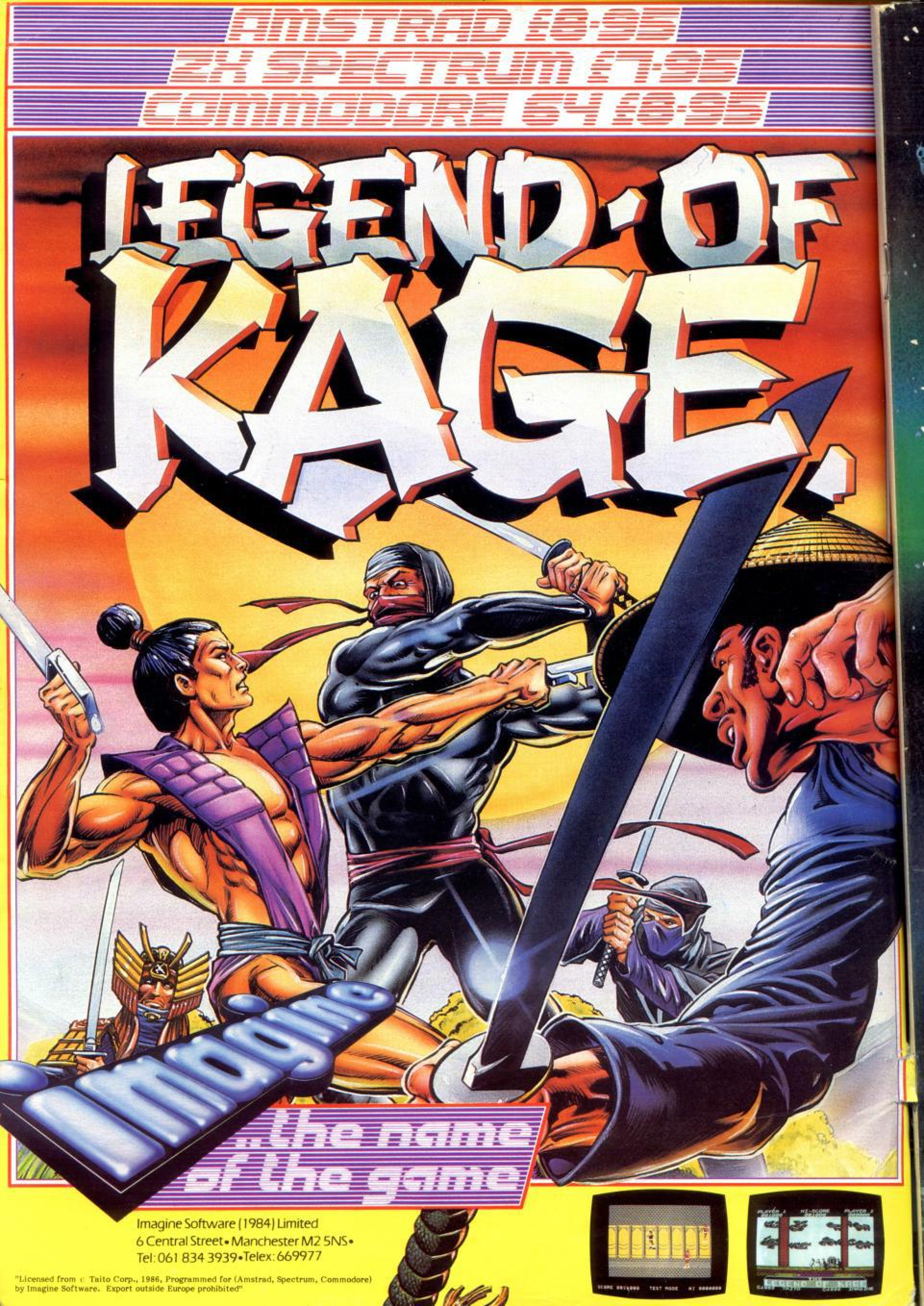
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# CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

ISSUE No. 36 1986/87

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## DIY



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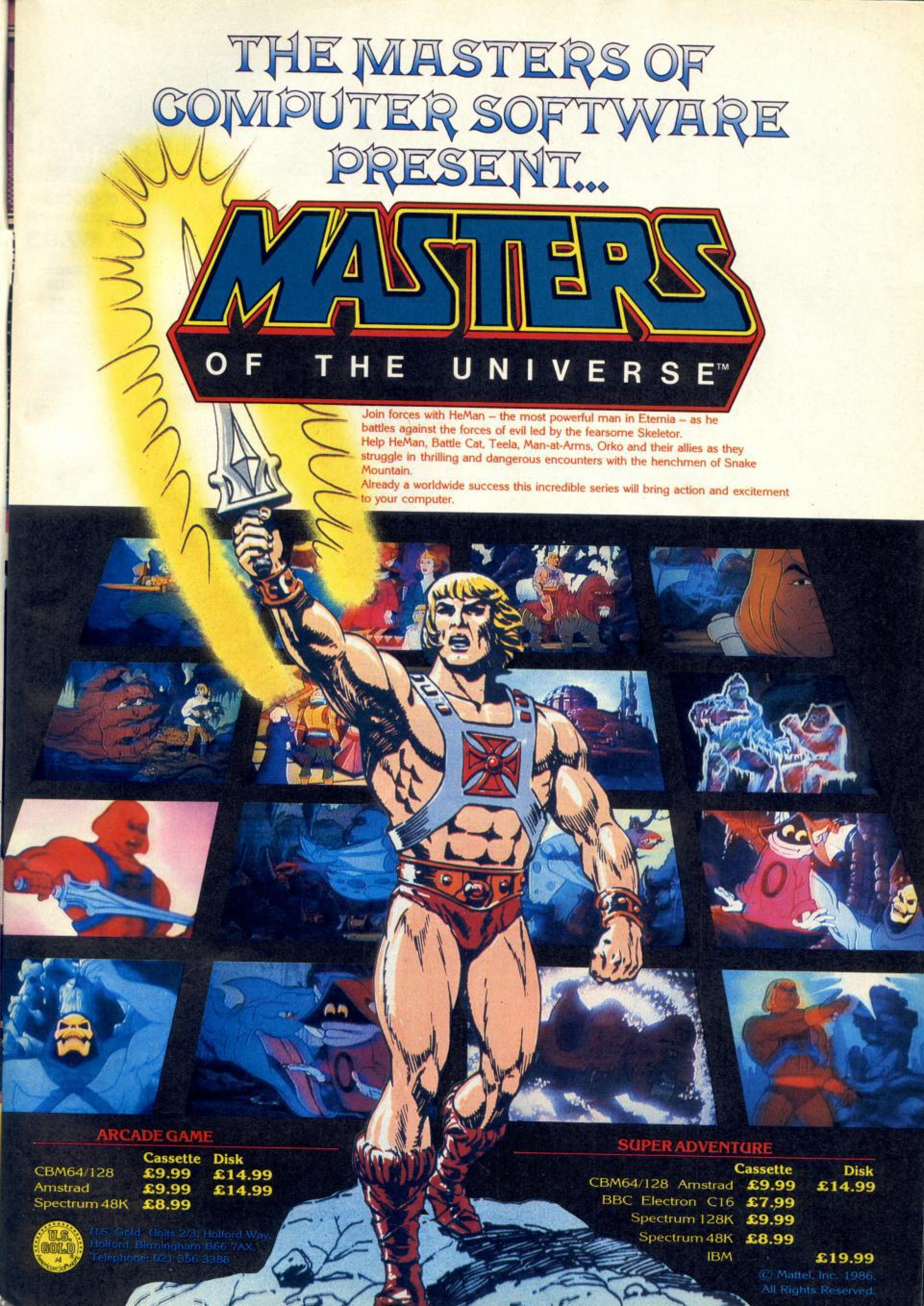


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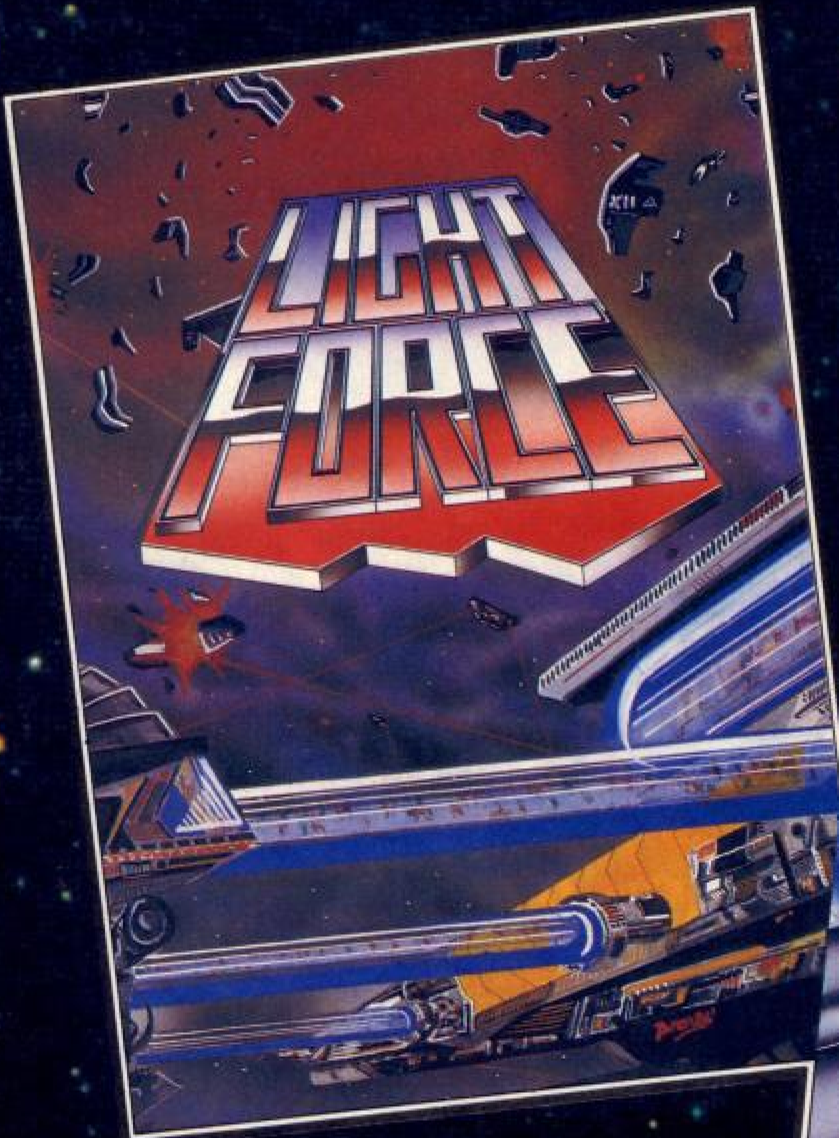
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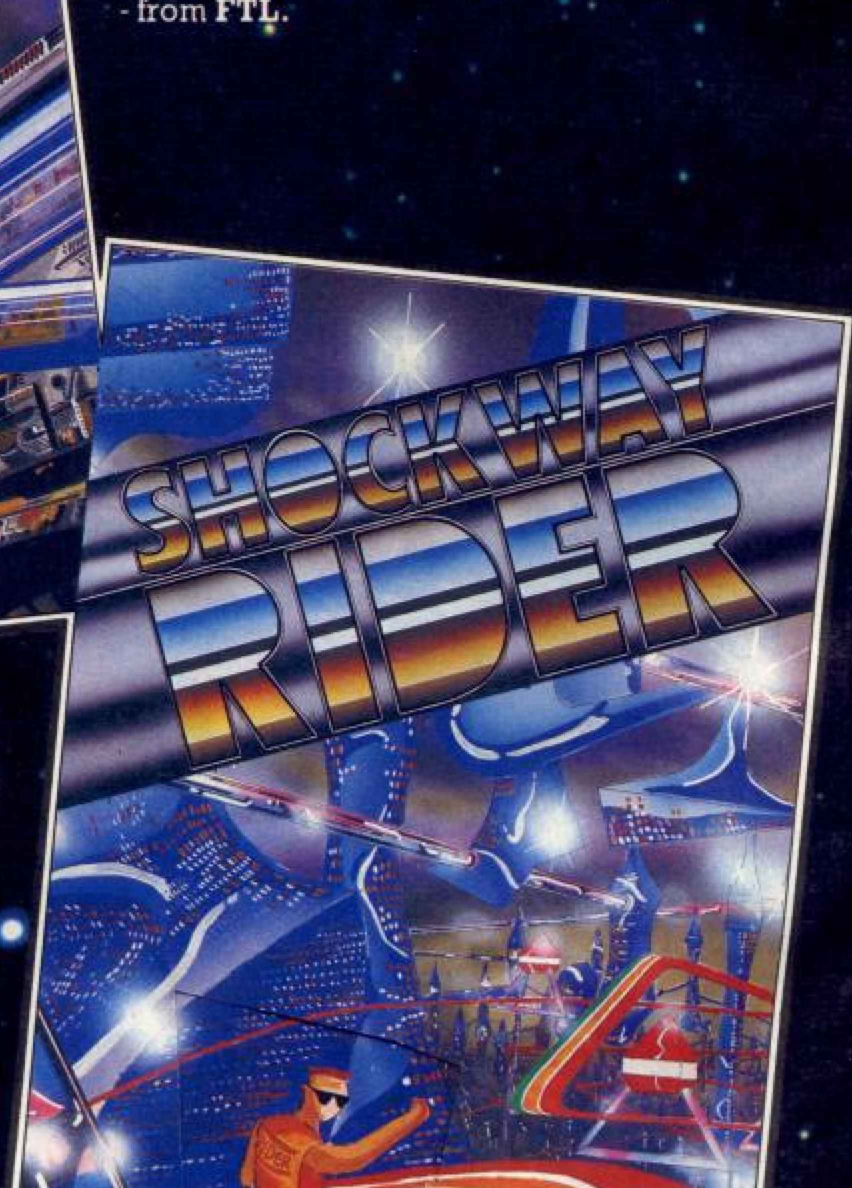


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There isn't a great deal to say at this festive time of year — apart from MERRY CHRISTMAS and a big thank you to everyone who has contributed to the fun.

It is traditional to speculate about the New Year and the goodies it will bring. We've seen the opinions of one or two people in the FORUM who reckon the Spectrum has just about reached the limits of its usefulness, given the capabilities of new machines that lurk just around the corner. Maybe the proliferation of high quality software that we've seen over the past few weeks will change the minds of these Scrooges — Spectrum owners are going to be spoiled for choice when it comes to Christmas shopping, compiling lists for Santa and spending present money in the January sales.

The Second Coming of dedicated Games Consoles, due any day now, is also supposed to be putting a nail in the Spectrum's coffin. Unlikely, even if Ultimate Play the Game now prefer to be known as Rare Ltd and plan to commit software to the ROMs of games consoles to the exclusion of all else . . . The level of programming competence currently attained on the Spectrum isn't suddenly going to be transferred to other machines, and there are plenty of people out there in the wide world who have not yet joined in the fun of playing games on the Spectrum. Now that software houses are paying more than lip service to the 128, games such as Starglider are beginning to show just what the race-tuned Spectrum can offer. Let's just hope that Amstrad can sort out the teething problems that surround the integral cassette recorder before prospective purchasers look elsewhere . . .

We're all looking forward to reviewing the new games of 1987 here in CRASH Towers. I hope you're looking forward to playing them!





## INDEX TO GAMES REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE



## ADVERTISERS' INDEX

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**3:April 84** ●Missile Command games●Living Guide●Code Name Mat

**4:May 84** ●The Quill Utility●Graphics utilities●Microdrive●'Pengo' games●Living Guide

**10:Nov 84** ●Battlefield Joystick — comparisons●Deus Ex Machina

**17:Jun 85** ●Denton Designs●Frankie●Spectrum surgery●Sinclair Story 3●Knight Lore Map 1●Underwurlde Map 2●Tape to Microdrive●Leonardo Graphics utility●Datel sound sampler●Artist: David Thorpe

**18:Jul 85** ●Gremlin Graphics profile●Artist Bob Wakelin●Sinclair TV●Tape Magazines●Leonardo utility part two●CRASHBACK looks again at games in issue 8●Gyron Map of Atrium●Modems round-up●And the cover that had the Jehovas Jumping!

**19:Aug 85** ●WITHOUT PAGES 123,124,125 and 126. WITH:●CRL Profile●Pull out Oliposter — Fighting Spectrum●Mirrorsoft Profile●Inside the Timex 2068●Round Up of BASIC compilers●On the Cover Artist Rich Shenfield●Maps of Dynamite Dan and Shadowfire

**20:Sep 85** ●ALIEN 8 and DUN DARACH maps●Electronic Pencil Company Profile●Part Two of BASIC Compilers Round-up●The 64K Spectrum●Design Design Autoprofile, Part 1●Rod Cousens interview

**21:Oct 85** ●Previews of MARSPORT, ASTROCLONE, ELITE●NODES OF YESOD map●Holografix profile — how to make a Hologram●Crashtionnaire analysis●Platinum Productions profile

**22:Nov 85** ●Feature on small computer magazines — looking at the opposition●Microdrive tips and hints in TECH NICHE and part two of the fast storage feature●Susan Rowe is on the Cover●An inside look at Fantasy Gamebooks

**23:Dec 85** ●Visit to Melbourne House●Minson goes Surfing●The Design Design autoprofile ends●Computer graphics feature — On The Cover is Dave Beeson from Central TV●Scary cover and Scary Preview of Friday 13th

**Xmas 1985/6** ●On the Cover Special — our very own Oliver Frey occupies five pages●Profile of the Gargoyle Games crew●Lloyd's Lookback, 1985 revisited●Hewson Consultants profile●Short story●Festive Fun and Frolics

**25:Feb 86** ●Durell — the profile●A chat with the Microsphere team●Double Dose of Jetman●Gremlin Graphics bring a Ninja to the Spectrum●TECH NICHE looks at a FORTH add-on and extensions to ZX BASIC

**26:Mar 86** ●ST BRIDE's Profile● A first look at the Spectrum 128●Micronet 800●Romantic Robot's Multiface One under scrutiny●Diary of 2186

**27:Apr 86** ●Massive 23 page Playing Tips Supplement●1985 Readers Awards results●Mel Croucher interview●Imagine profile●Round up of 128K games●A visit to the first Play By Mail convention

**28:May 86** ●Update on the Fanzine scene●MARTECH profile and PLANETS preview●DIY Composite Video Interface●Inside Cheetah's SpecDrum●FRONTLINE Mini Strategyback●CRASHTIONNAIRE 86 analysis

**29:Jun 86** ●First PBM MAILBOX and CRASH GALLERY●SpecDrum listing●Homegrown software●REALTIME profile●Compilations compared●Maps of CYLU, SIR FRED, SABOTEUR and Parts 1 and 2 of TANTALUS

**30:Jul 86** ●More CRASH/RAINBIRD Gallery●More Homegrown Software●THE BIRTH OF A GAME: some early entries●Good Games by DESIGN●Luna Jetman returns

**31:Aug 86** ●Hannah goes wrestling!●A look in the DRAGON's LAIR●Sinclair 'LOKI' myths exploded●Erniesoft interview●Pete Tamlyn starts looking at Role Playing Computer games●Wordprocessor roundup

**32:Sept 86** ●GAC reviewed●The Music Box opened●Pete Tamlyn concludes●MIKRO-GEN's Dave Perry talks about Wally and Ricky Steele●Repairing your Quickshot 2●Dan Dare arrives!

**33:Oct 86** ●Jon Ritman — Mr BATMAN and Mr MATCH DAY●The GENESIS project: the programming begins●Hunter S Minson goes missing!●Multitracking SpecDrum●Costa Panaya interviewed

**34:Nov 86** ●Don Priestley, creator of POPEYE and TRAPDOOR interviewed●MUSIC MACHINE reviewed●Games Day report●CHEETAH's Sound Sampler sampled●PBM Diplomats Directory opened●GENESIS — Kat Trap previewed and the Marketing Mix explained

**35:Dec 86** ●Dan Malone, the artist behind PALACE interviewed●RAM ELECTRONICS release a ROM-based wordprocessor●GLIDER RIDER map●MIDI interface examined●Spectrum Plus Two problems examined

Issues 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 are now out of stock.SORRY! Back issues are going fast — better get your orders in quick. It's probably worth telephoning if you want to order early issues, as we're getting short. And if you missed issue 19, we can now complete the gap in your collection with a trimmed down version, which has a tasteful sticker added to the front cover announcing the fact!

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# Fear & Loathing



# MORE PARTIES . . . AND A CRYSTAL BALL

**The phone is ringing. "Got a little job for you, Minson. Like you to do an end of the year article. Make it double length. Plenty of time. Don't need it till the end of this week."**

Goddam, they want me to wind up '86, and because magazines don't just appear out of nowhere, I'm still in the process of struggling with November. Okay, then — let's tackle that before Hunter S gets serious and actually talks about . . . (wouldja believe?) computing.

It was about this time last year that I got chucked out of the Savoy Hotel in London. The occasion was the National Computer Games Championship. Well, the Championship was here again, but the Savoy had refrained from potting its spruce until after the event, so no Xmas pin-up piccie, I'm afraid.

No — this time my problems arose from the labyrinthine nature of the Savoy's basement. As I wandered I began to experience that feeling of despair, well known to adventurers who make the mistake of straying into the 'dark forest by the roadside' then find that 'Go North' no longer helps.

## TERRY WEIGHT

When I finally did find my way out of the maze, it was into a blaze of light. Television cameras were rolling as Cuddly **Dave Carlos**, his beard specially trimmed for the occasion, announced the contestants. The effects was most amusing — rather like Terry Waite, to whom Dave bears more than a passing resemblance, compereing Miss World.

Talking of Miss World, the lovely **Janice Gallagher** dragged me out of the spotlights, explained that they didn't want to do an in-depth interview with me quite at that moment, and propelled me towards the bar. She also told me that the game that was being used in the final was *Cop Out*, the brand new one from MIKRO-GEN, who celebrated their fifth birthday while I was doing in depth research in Sweden (see the forthcoming article in **LM** — if I ever get it together).

This omnipotent organ had neglected to enter a contestant, so who won was almost incidental to the extremely well-stocked bar. Almost, I say, because though the victor was an Amstrad person (yawn), he was the official POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY candidate. Now, as the sharp eyed amongst you will know, I write for PCW. In fact, they were almost the first computer title to print my reviews, so I have a great sentimental attachment to them.

Better still, the champion **David Litherland** comes from Horwich, which lies next to Bolton, 'oop north in Lancashire. Bolton just happens to be my home town, and I know the cosmopolitan charms of Horwich too. So to David I say, congratulations . . . and don't worry, you too may escape like I did!

Actually, I almost had much more to say to him, owing to an oversight on somebody's part. You see, when it looked like The Battling Boltonian was a dead cert, Carlos started searching for a PCW representative . . . only to find there wasn't one. Such are the pressures of producing a weekly, they'd planned to roll up at the very last minute!

Chaos reigned. It was even suggested that I should act on behalf of the magazine, but I declined and instead suggested that Carlos should get on the dog and bone immediately. Which he did, summoning the very lovely **Christine Erskine** herself. She arrived, slightly out of breath, to pat their man's back.

## JOYSTICK WIMPS

Competition of a different sort the following day. **Mike Baxter**, had invited the press, magazine advertising staff and even his Auntie down to that almost trendy cross between a restaurant and a television showroom; The Video Cafe.

The excuse for this bash was the KONIX *Speedking* joystick, an object which resembles nothing more than that most tuneless musical instrument, the occarina. For some reason, KONIX wanted the gentlemen of the press to try and destroy two of these things.

Now there is only one way of killing a joystick for many people, and that's that classic of wrist action, *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*. And as an added incentive, whoever scored highest in this test of waggling could win a weekend for two in Amsterdam.

The whole lunch was most revealing. Everybody wanted to go to Amsterdam, of course. But when it came to coming forward . . . well, everyone seemed a little behind. Could it be that all these editors and star writers were shy of their games playing prowess?

The atmosphere was like a superpowers summit. Everyone was trying to do deals with each other. "Look, I'm brilliant at this game, but I won't compete so that you can win . . . but only if you promise to take me with you."

But not for me such cowardly tactics. I'd been in training for this event for weeks. I'd been out jogging (once). I'd done press up (four of them). I'd taken every type of anabolic steroid I could find in Boots. And. . . . unfortunately, I'd neglected to play the game.

Yes — as I sat at a sweaty Spectrum I realised that I'd never played *Decathlon* before! I'd socked it to *Supertest*; I'd sweltered in the *Summer Games*; I'd waggled my stick all *Winter* . . . but I'd dumped out on *Decathlon*. This did mean that while I was okay on the tests of speed, like the sprint, I had no idea what I was doing when it came to the jumping events.

My performance was hardly Chariots of Fire. More Skateboards of Hot Air really. But it still placed me about fourth. Now, this all raises a question of journalistic ethics. Just how much do I tell you about the performances of my fellow hacks? I fear I must be discrete.

There was one journo who make a feeble excuse about having lots of work to do back at the office, just before his turn. No names, mind — just let's say he was the 'eminence gris' of another Sinclair publication. Probably had to get back to await the arrival of the Loki and check the photofiles for more pictures of NEWSFIELD Reviewer-Champion **Ben Stone** at the ZX Microfair to print in his organ!

And what about the editor who managed to come last? Perhaps he would be happier editing SMASH HITS after all! The weekend in Amsterdam went to the YOUR COMMODORE competitor though. Obviously a man who gives his right wrist lots of exercise.

The real winners were the joysticks. Not only did they stand up to the action, their easy switching meant that it was possible to go for that Coe burst of speed and maintain it. Driven on to greater things, KONIX is at this very moment inventing a robot joystick destructor, and is inviting you, the public, to guess how long a *Speedking* will endure this bionic bashing.

If you'd like to win £100, whizz off your estimate to KONIX, C/o **SOLUTION PUBLIC RELATIONS, 2 Wellingtonia Court, Varndean Park, Brighton BN1 6TD** and mark it *Daley Thompson's Decathlon Test.* Don't forget your name and address and do mention that Hunter S sent you. You'd better be quick off the mark, because the big event is happening in early January.

## "LUNCHBREAKS"

That brings us up to date, apart from one thing . . . it seems that MICRONET's Slasher has done a far better job digging up the dirt on Minson than the late, unlamented Shadow ever did in ZZAP!

From what I hear, he got the facts right, including how I used to howl with an obscenely named punk band who made the Mary Chain sound sophisticated, and (worse still) my involvement with an Amstrad word processor magazine!

Well done then, Slasher. I bear you no grudge at all, and certainly wouldn't dream of being the Gremlin that blew your anonimity, now that you're a Bourne-again gossip!

So that's the way the year will end, if not with a BANG (RIP), certainly not with a whimper either. There's just the round up of Christmas parties to come, and don't worry — I'll be there, drinking Bloody Marys and getting into dangerous craziness.

But before I get too out of my head on every heinous substance known to mankind, I want to try and look back at '86. No I don't. CRASH wants me to look back at '86. I want to look forward into '87.

## CONSOLEATION?

1987, we are told, will be the year of the games console revival. ATARI is back with the buggers, and ARIOLASOFT is putting its





*The delectable Clare Edgeley, once an EMAP staff writer, now a RAIN BIRD person. Hear her dulcet tones on the 128K version of STARGLIDER*

weight behind SEGA's machine, while the NINTENDO contender is also on the way over here. 1987 or '82?

What does it all mean? For one thing, the division between players and programmer is out in the open, once and for all. There was a great lie about computers: "But if I don't have one, how can I learn to program, and if I don't learn to program, I won't be prepared for the (gasp!) Silicon Revolution."

Now I, for one, have never been convinced that learning where LOAD and two quotation marks lie on a keyboard counts as programming. But it's enough for all the people who use these three keystrokes to unleash the fearsome power of shoot em ups and adventures.

The plain fact is that many people don't give a twopenny damn about how structured their BASIC is. And this is what the console manufacturers and distributors are counting on. Gamers just want to have fun.

Ahh, but I can hear the cries and shouts of the hacking brigade already as their champion, the charming Hannah Smith, takes up the challenge. "But what about the cheat pokes, which are amongst the most popular features in the magazines?"

Typing in twenty lines of code from a magazine is as much like programming as copying twenty lines of Romeo and Juliet is to becoming Shakespeare. It's only a minority who actually analyse the code for the benefit of others. The consoles, with their vast RAMs and instant loading are set to kill the games computers with their limited sound and colour, like the Spectrum. Or are they?

1987 is supposed to be all explosions and wrecked joysticks, even if there are no more infinite lives. But by losing that minority of freaks, weirdos and eggheads who actually like to sit up all night, up to their elbows in code, the console manufacturers are also losing the people who have made the Spectrum what it is today.

Just take a look at a 1983 Spectrum game and you'll see what I mean. Sure, it will still be playable — addictive for a while, even — but comparable with today's programs? Do leave it out!

The history of Spectrum programming is littered with milestones; programs that did the impossible with the humble machine. *Lords of Midnight* with its apparently infinite landscape. *Starstrike 3D* with its superfast vector graphics. Even utilities like *The Quill*, which turned everyone into adventure writers.

Sure, you can buy these titles on other machines. But they originated on the Spectrum, and there's a sense of excitement about the machine — far more than any other micro. Back bedroom boffins sweated into the early hours to learn code, just so they could bring you *Manic Miner* or *Arcadia*. They pounded away at rubbery keys to push the machine forward.

## ON THE BLOWER

But where are the consoles' keyboards? If they become available at all, it will be as optional extras, at some unspecified later date. As to saving your efforts to tape — no way! This is the age of the EPROm blower. Even if you can afford that little extra, you could well find that you can't sell your programs direct. First you'll have to get a licence from the distributor. Who will in turn have to get the, 'Ha-so! Ho-kay!' from Japan.

The consoles symbolise one of the things that is wrong with this world; the big boys taking over. But the big boys don't necessarily know what you, the individual, want. At the moment they think it's shoot 'em ups and driving games and platforms and ladders. Noisy shoot 'em ups. Fast driving games. Colourful platforms and ladders. But if you've already cut the teeth on the Spectrum, you'll have been through that stage already.

If you want these games, they're already available, a lot cheaper than they'll be in cartridge form. And when you get tired of zapping the BEMs, your Spectrum lets move onto something a little more sophisticated. They say that there are only seven plots in the whole of literature. That means there are about five in gaming. And the consoles want to restrict you to three of them!

## THE MIGHTY FALLING?

Consoles won't take over but big things seem set to happen in the world of computing. In the last couple of months rumours have abounded concerning the impending collapse of certain software companies. We are not just talking little league here, but about big boys. Companies which own several labels. Companies which used to top the charts. Companies who have been around since the beginning.

I don't intend to name names. The software industry is always full of rumours, so it wouldn't be fair. And there are the laws of libel to consider. But I wouldn't be in the least surprised that in three or four months time things looked very different.

It's another example of businesses getting too big; out of hand and out of touch. A big company has to put out products to convince the punters that it's big. Unluckily it then screws itself by not giving the programmers time to develop games. It backs movies in expensive tie-ins . . . only to have the game appear nine months after the movie has flopped.

The year has produced some great games, but the weeks leading up to Christmas have produced some turkeys too! There have been games which have attempted to do the impossible, sadly proving that yes, the Spectrum does have its limits.

I don't know what will happen in '87 but I'm rather worried. The Spectrum is an old machine. We can only push it so far in any one direction before it shows its age. Perhaps the time has come for the bedroom boffins to get back to work, free from the pressures of tie-ins, and for more time to be spent on original game design. Because if this industry does contract, it means me, and many more like me, may have to buy their own liquid lunches!

A Merry Christmas and let's hope it's a Happy New Year too.

**Hunter S Minson**

# The Scrapbook



Hannah goes shopping for a man and comes back with... Cam!



A rosy cheeked Girlee Tipster...



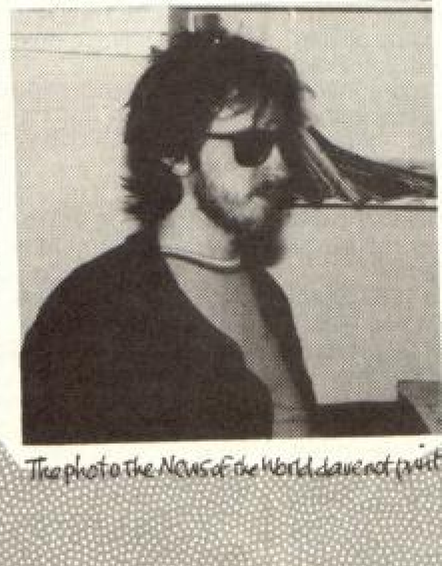
...Keeps sharp with a pinch of Granny Grunge's Ludlow Snuff



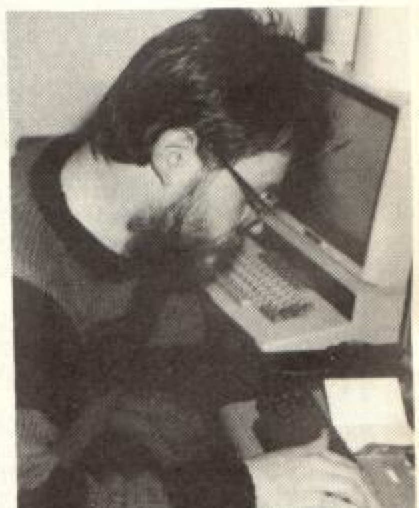
'I'd much rather have a cup of tea anytime' says Boy Sumpter, busking in his best frock...



The Doc Martened one sports a No 1 crop...



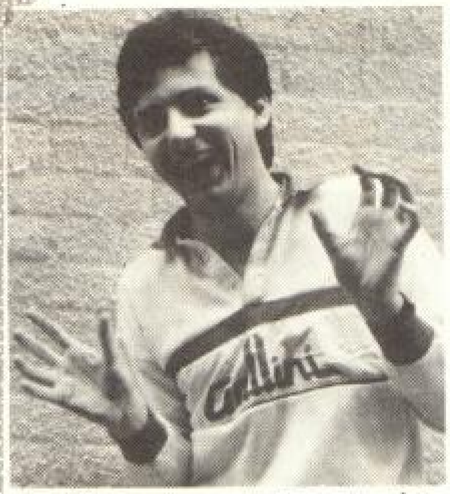
The photo the News of the World dare not print



... meanwhile here's a hairy editor we prepared earlier



Mr Puniverse is lent a mystery hand



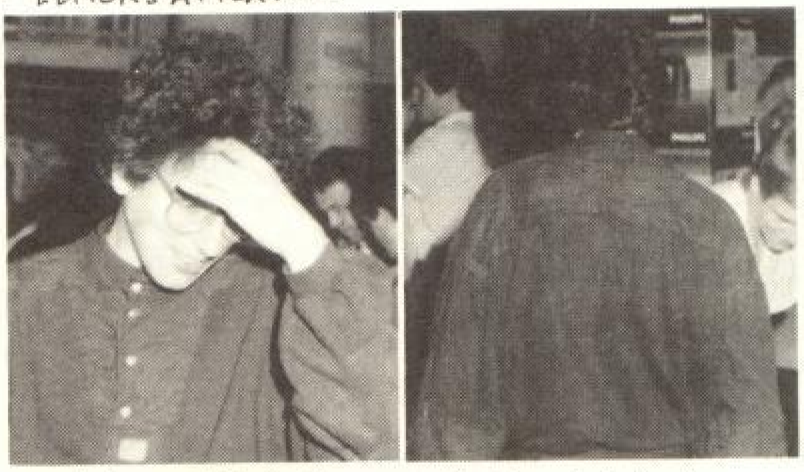
Lee Paddon prepares to get to grips with Sam Fox's Strip Poker

EDITORS AT PLAY: 1



Failing to find a phone box, YOUR SINCLAIR's Ed Kevin Cox gets into superman mode

EDITORS AT PLAY: 2



David 'Greta Garbo' Kelly, SINCLAIR USER's Ed wants to be alone

EDITORS AT PLAY: 3



Oy, I told you not to let my octopus near That Old Flatulence Bitter - he's nearly legless




Before he got into labels seriously Ben Stone modelled Crash T shirts



...now he models tree frogs



# THEY STOLE A MILLION

**Producer: 39 Steps**
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Tigress Designs**

This game comes in two parts. In the first, you pick one of five targets. The money made from one job is then re-invested in the next. A raid on the local coin dealers should net you a few thousand. This can then be used to buy the information you need, and a team of crack specialists, for the art gallery job.

There is a rogue's gallery of 18 hoodlums. Each has a dossier on their past experience, but the nitty gritty is in the last page of information: how much they cost to hire, how much of the 'take' do they expect and what are their skills. This determines how long they'll take to pick locks, dis-able alarms or blow a safe.

At this stage of the game there is lots of information you can buy on the target. Most of this is vital stuff - like where the alarms are, and what you are after. If you just go in blind and whip everything, the 'fence' won't give you the full value of the items - whatever happened to honour among thieves!

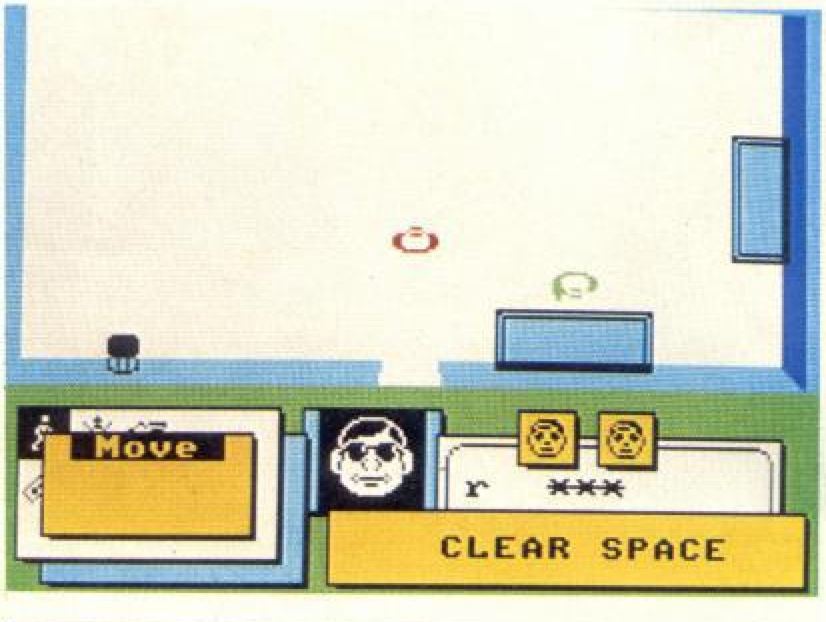
Once you're happy with your team, load the next section of the game. The raid must now be planned. This means telling each member of the team exactly what to do. This is all icon-driven. First toggle between the members of your team, select one, and then tell him where to move and what to do. Most actions take time. It is therefore essential to make sure that the actions of the various team members are co-ordinated so that, for instance, two men don't try going through the same door from opposite sides, or no-one breaks in to an alarmed case before the alarm has been dealt with.

Once a 'track' for each crook has been made, the program has extensive editing facilities. This allows you to re-organise the raid to make more efficient use of your men. Also at higher levels, you will have to cope with security men on regular patrols, so you must time the paths so as not to arouse their suspicions.

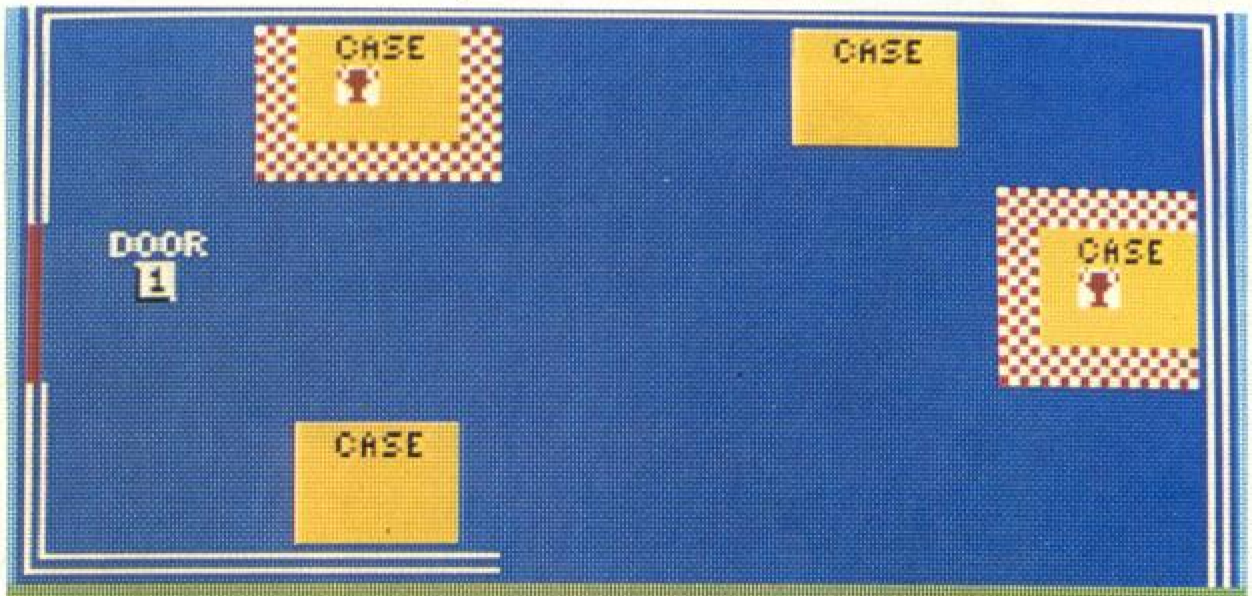
Last but not least, to the raid itself. The men go through their pre-ordained patterns. Messages come up if there are problems, (i.e.locked doors, 'the filth' etc.). During the raid, you control the boss (who can do a bit of pilfering himself), or act as look-out. He can assist members of the gang who get in trouble, abort the raid and return to the planning stage, or tell the men to freeze when a police patrol goes past.

After all this, the dosh is split up, and you load up the first part of the game again, just in time to go for another job.

*Controlling the big boss during the raid. One of 'da boys' tackles a display cabinet*




*Planning the coin raid, 29 seconds into the raid, 'fingures' tackles a locked door*




## CRITICISM

● **"I had great fun playing this. The whole idea of the game is very original, and extremely interesting to play. If you want a fast action game, then you won't like *TSAM* as it requires lots a brain work and a considerable amount of note making. The menu system of choosing your options is easy to get used to and is very quick to use. The graphics, during the robbery, are very smooth and detailed. Definately one for those cold winter evenings! And much safer than the real thing (I would think!)"**

● *"Generally I really dislike this sort of game as there is often little or no fun involved in playing them. TSAM* however has been written and presented in such a way that even mere mortal arcade freaks can actually play it and enjoy it. The first part is a bit boring, flicking through masses of information windows can get very tedious if you haven't really got into the sprit of the game. The second robery stage really is good fun. You've got to be on the ball at all times. Go and buy it."

● "Gosh, this game is good! The windowing system is superbly done, and the whole game is definitely one that has been put together very well indeed. The idea is a good one, and one that I can't say I've seen before. Presentation is of a very high calibre, and playability wise, I find it hard to fault. Colourful, and graphically very good, *TSAM* is pleasant on both the eyes and the brain. I usually dislike strategy games, but this one is certainly well worth while. I like it."

## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** definable: up, down, left, right, fire
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** fine
**Use of colour:** rather restrained
**Graphics:** lacks detail
**Sound:** negligable
**Skill levels:** one
**Screens:** five large buildings
**General rating:** an inovative game

| | |
|---|---|
| Use of computer | 89% |
| Graphics | 56% |
| Playability | 85% |
| Getting started | 82% |
| Addictive qualities | 88% |
| Value for money | 84% |
| **Overall** | **85%** |

# THE EIDOLON

**Producer: Activision**
Retail Price: **£7.99**

More than a hundred years ago, Dr Josef Agon started experimenting into his own subconscious. The end result of these experiments was a strange machine called The Eidolon. Seated in this contraption he would venture into the innermost reaches of his psyche, and confront the hidden perils which resided there. However, Agon's experiments were shrouded in mystery, and he became a reclusive figure, living out the last years of his life holed up in his mansion and never seen.

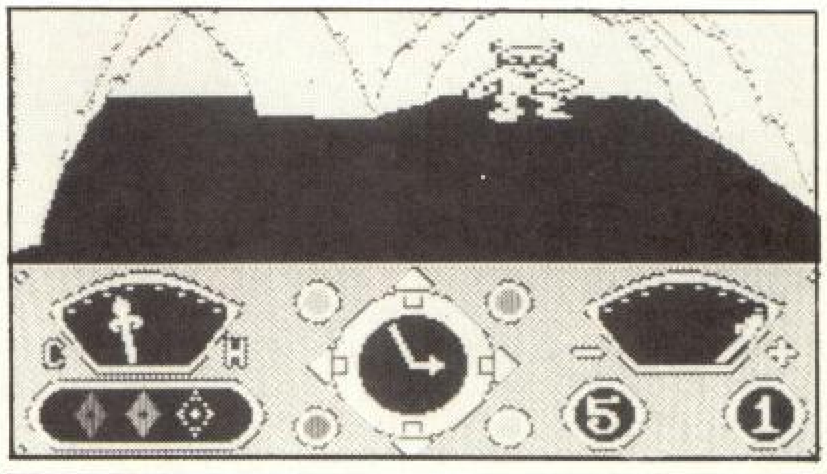
A hundred years later his mansion remains the same, untouched since the good doctor's mysterious disappearance. However, whilst walking home one night you see that the mansion's rusted gates are open and that a strange light is emitting from within. As you start to explore the house you find the old Eidolon machine, and by its side is the Doctor's diary. Plagued with curiousity, you open the dusty volume and discover the secrets of the Eidolon.

The Eidolon is a spherical vehicle just big enough for a man to sit in. When in operation, it floats on the mind's energy waves. It is equipped with a multi-purpose catcher/cannon, which is used to blast any monster you might encounter, and also to collect the many energy jewels which float in your mind. To begin with, The Eidolon transports you to the first of the seven cave systems which comprise your mind. The machine can be guided through this system, searching out the perils within. At the bottom of the screen is the Eidolon's instrument panel. The top half of the screen shows the view as seen through the cockpit window. Three dimensional graphics depict the arched roof of the caverns as the action moves towards you.

Each level has an exit, but this is guarded by a monster. The key to this exit must be taken, and the monster annihilated by a quick blast from the energy bolts you carry. Then, the next level can be loaded from tape. The higher the level, the more difficult it becomes to kill these monsters.

Various things must be collected during your travels if you are to progress right up to the seventh level of your subconscious. Energy spheres boost the flagging power levels of your Eidolon. If you are close enough to an object, a diamond shaped force-field will appear. This signifies that The Eidolon can capture the object with the collector/discharger situated on its roof. Blue spheres freeze time, thus allowing you a longer roam around the caverns. When these blue fireballs are fired at a creature, it also freezes, and you gain extra time to consider the best way to destroy it.

The controls in the Eidolon are suitably Victorian in appearance. There is a hot/cold indicator which tells you how close The Eidolon is to a monster. Gem indicators show how many gems you have stolen from the guardians. There is a clock to the centre of the control board, showing how long you have been exploring your subconscious. The energy level shows how much of a pounding The Eidolon has taken from the monsters, and the digits at the bottom of the dashboard show how much time remains before you must return to the real world.



*A really cute troll down amongst the tunnels; you know what you gotta do — blast the living daylights out of him*

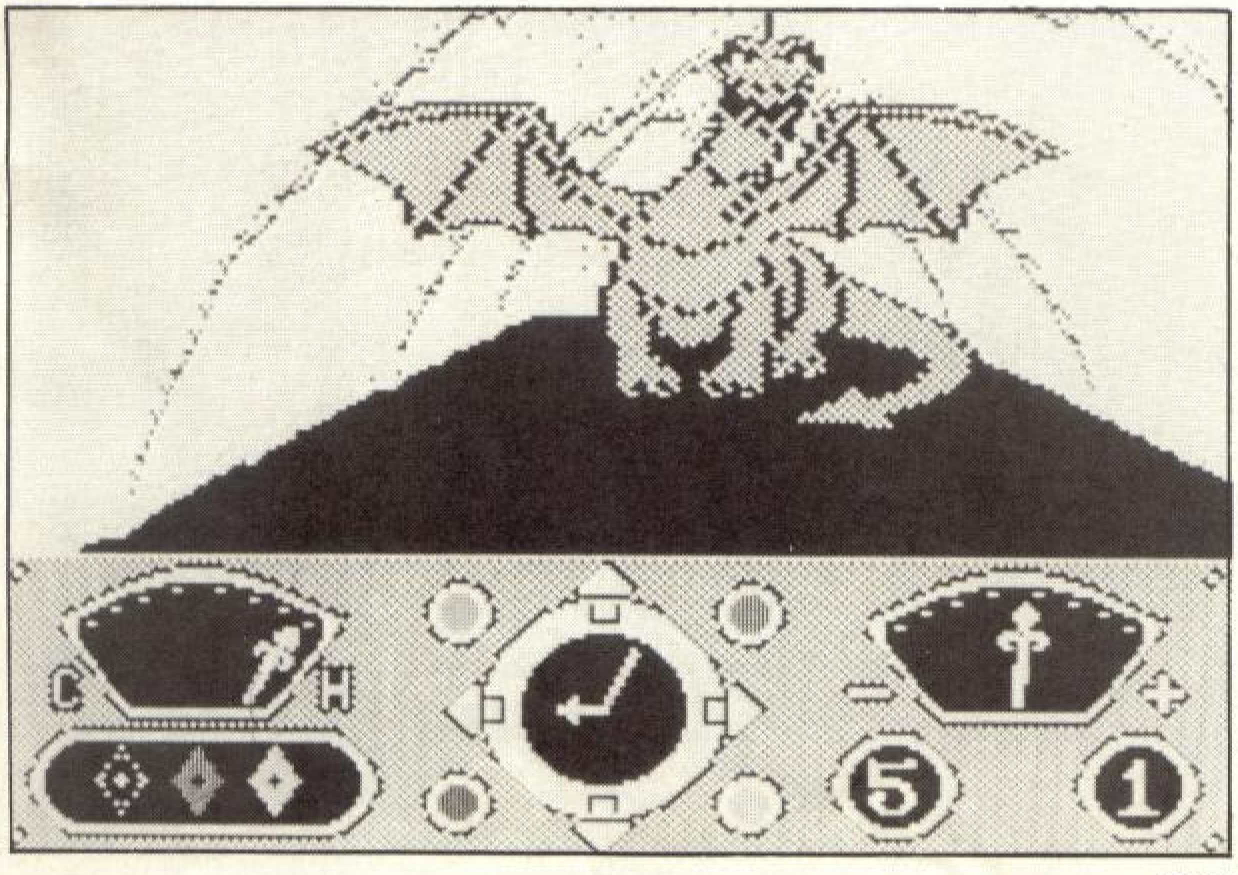
## CRITICISM

● **"This is just one of those games which doesn't really work on the Spectrum and that's a shame because the original concept is simply brilliant. The real problem lies in that *Eidolon* relies heavily on both colour and sound which on the Spectrum aren't exactly all that flexible. Hence we have a black 'n' white *Eidolon*, rendering the game slightly dull in places. Its saving grace is the fact that it is quite fast, speeding up what could have otherwise been a rather dull and uninteresting game."**

● *"It's here and it's even faster than all the other versions (so you can hassle all your mates about having slow computers), but alas more than this I can't say. I found it tremendously difficult to actually get into the game and to play it successfully, perhaps after a large amount of practise it will grow on me but I'm not really prepared to play a game that annoys me for longer than I have to. The game has superb graphics save one thing, colour, this is understandably but drastically lacking. The sound is very good, there are a few effects during the game and a lovely tune on the title screen."*

● "Wowee! The graphics on this are really something! The fractal effect on Rescue was limited, to say the least, but on the Eidolon, Activision have really let go. The effect of cavernous walls is quite claustraphobia-inducing, if that adjective can be applied to a Spectrum game. *Eidolon* is fairly playable, and addictive, dependent on whether the game style appeals to you or not."

*A nasty big dragon near the end of the first level; he's guarding a crystal, so get blasting*



## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** up Q; down Z; left 9; right 0; fire N, M, CAPS, SYMBOL-SHIFT; choose crystal 1-4; capture fireball/jewels X-B; pause P
**Joystick:** Kempston, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** pretty good
**Use of colour:** mainly monochrome
**Graphics:** large and well animated
**Sound:** tune and spot effects
**Skill levels:** seven
**Screens:** loads
**General rating:** nice try at converting a game that was never suitable for the Spectrum

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | 79% |
| **Graphics** | 78% |
| **Playability** | 75% |
| **Getting started** | 71% |
| **Addictive qualities** | 75% |
| **Value for money** | 74% |
| **Overall** | **76%** |


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# FAT WORM

## blows a sparky

Now for something completely different. You are an insidious little WORMIE being chased through a micro-electronic labyrinth (you guessed it — a Sinclair Spectrum!) by CREEPERS in SPUTNIKS and CRAWLERS on foot (feets?). Defend yourself by shooting BURPER SPARKIES at the CRAWLERS, and BLASTER SPARKIES to take out the SPUTNIKS. You'll see the computer board in a smooth-scrolling 3D viewed from above (yawn, yawn, — just another bit of mega-programming), as you crawl around in search of a DISK DRIVE on which to CLONE yourself. First you'll need to find fifty SPINDLES to eat, which will replenish your supply of SPARKIES to shoot at the BUGS. How long can you crawl down a DATA BUS? Find out how refreshing a DE-BUGGER feels when you're stuck in a Spectrum and covered in CRAWLIES. This game is like, WELL CRUCIAL MAN.

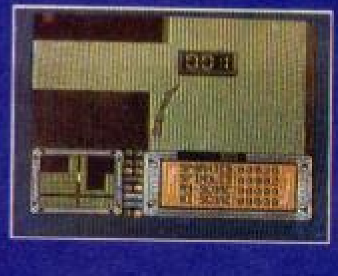
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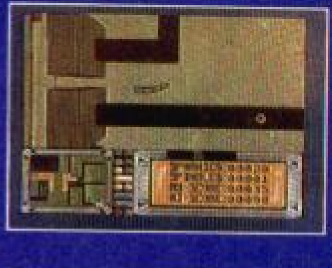
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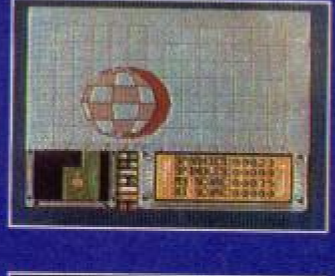
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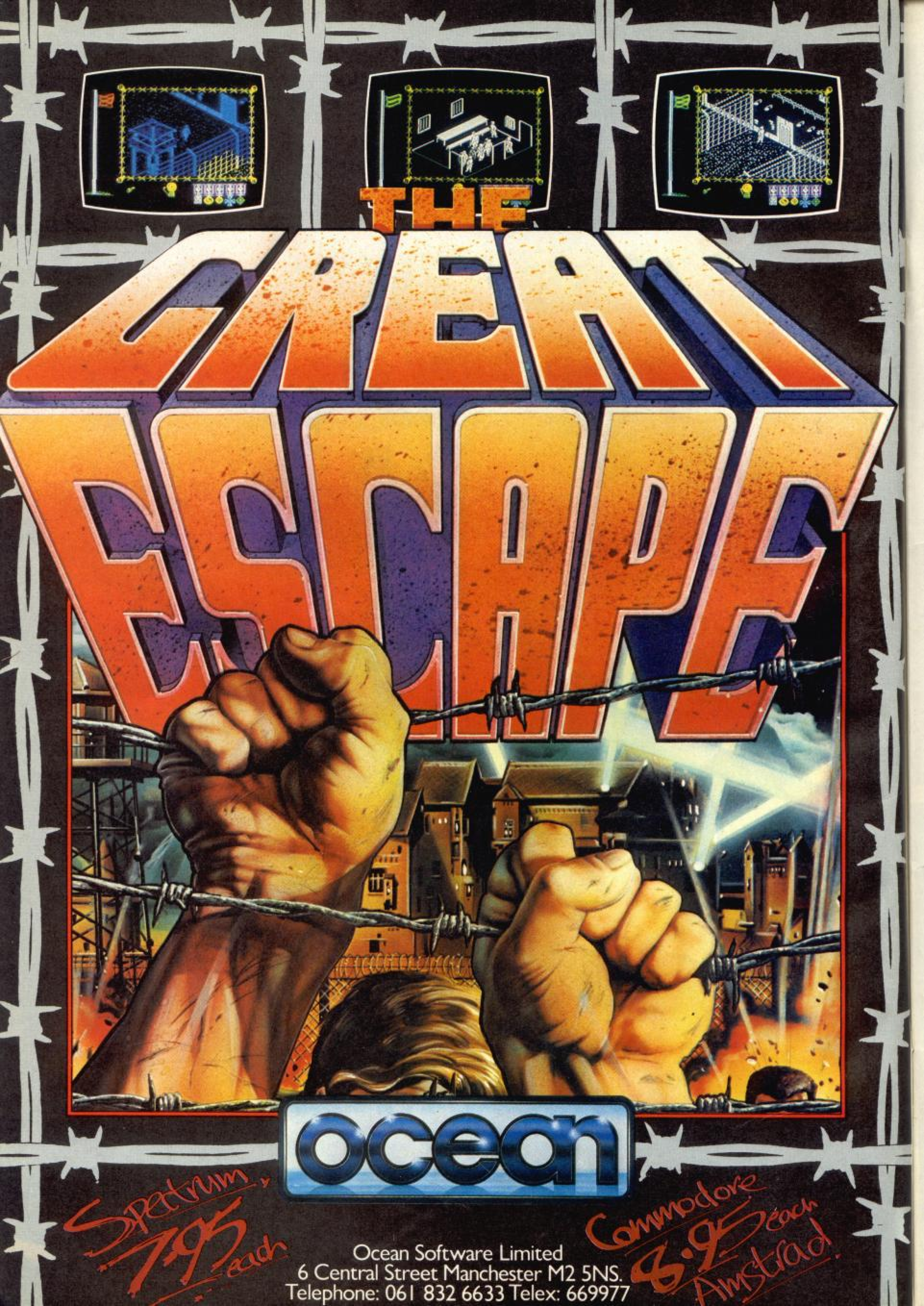






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# FUTURE KNIGHT

**Producer: Gremlin Graphics**
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Shaun Hollingworth, Greg Holmes, Chris Kerry, Pete Harrap**

Although our story is set many years in the future, the noble art of chivalry is not dead. This is just as well as the ship in which Amelia is travelling has crashlanded on planet 2749/2 of the Zragg system, and worse still, the fair Amelia has been abducted by the dastardly Spegbott. Guarded by the grotesque Henchdroid in Spegbott's castle, Amelia's life is in mortal peril.

Randolf, a professional hero and Future Knight, receives a distress call from the wrecked S.S Rustbucket requesting his help immediately. But when Randolf reaches the crashed ship he finds that he has quite a mission on his armour-plate. Of course, for the love of Amelia he is willing to risk life and limb - cor, they don't make them like that anymore!

There are twenty levels to Randolph's mission. Firstly, the Future Knight has to hack his way through the ruined space ship out on to the planet surface. Once there he must make his way to Spegbott's castle and locate the alluring Amelia. However, in each main level there are multiple sub-levels. Each of these sub-levels has two doors, and Randolf must fight his way from one door to the other greeting each foe in his path with zeal.

Randolf starts out each life with 999 units of energy. Each time he's caught by one of Spegbott's henchmen, this level goes down by a certain amount. When this level reaches zero, then Randolf loses one of his three lives. A bomb, if picked up, will not only rid the screen of all aliens, but will also boost your Knight's energy. When all three lives have been used up the game is over, and Amelia will be left to the dastardly devices of the evil Spegbott.

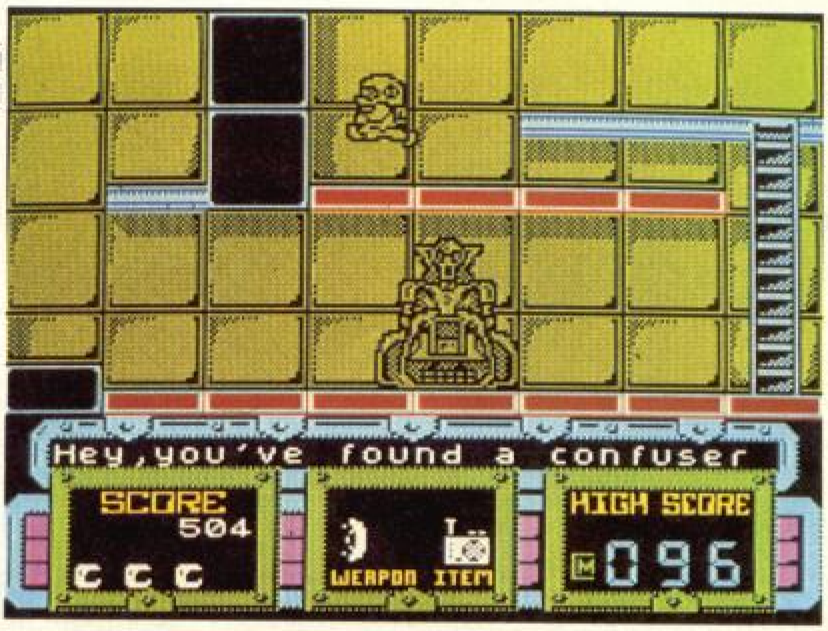
However, the baddies don't get it all their own way. Randolf has a very nifty gun built into his space suit which is very handy for blasting the baddies. This gun can be changed for another by visiting the ship's armoury. These guns have infinite blasting power, so Randolf can go forth and be very destructive if he likes.

Randolf is a bit of an exhibitionist. If you ignore him for a period of time, then the little Knight starts waving at you to attract your attention. If you refuse to continue the game he starts doing a little dance to amuse himself. If you still take no notice then he starts going totally berserk and spinning around on the spot.

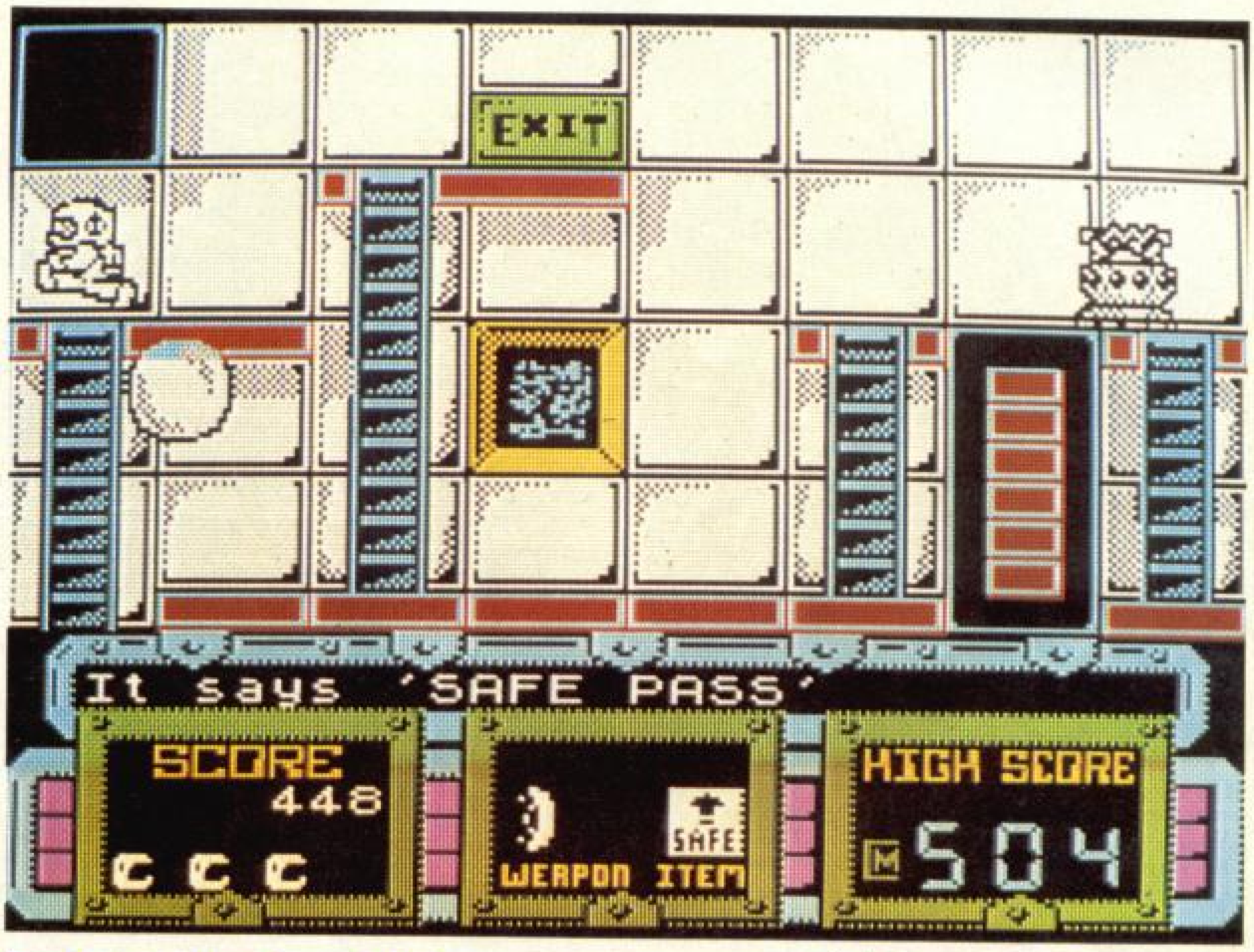
There are other useful objects which Randolf can collect to help him with his mission. These range from confusers, which do exactly what their name suggests, to various spells which will build bridges and extra exits.

## CRITICISM

● **"I'm not very sure about this game. It was actually great fun for a while as I leapt around the platforms fighting nasties. However, there are some niggly problems. For a start off climbing up certain ladders just lead off onto the screen above - fine, except when you don't want to go to the screen above. Generally, I can't really put my finger, there's something about it that I'm not too keen on and I would recommend that you have a look at this before investing the old crinky stuff."**



On to the second level, is the confuser just picked up going to be any help tackling the demon?



Cameron gets a safe pass, but the score is draining away fast

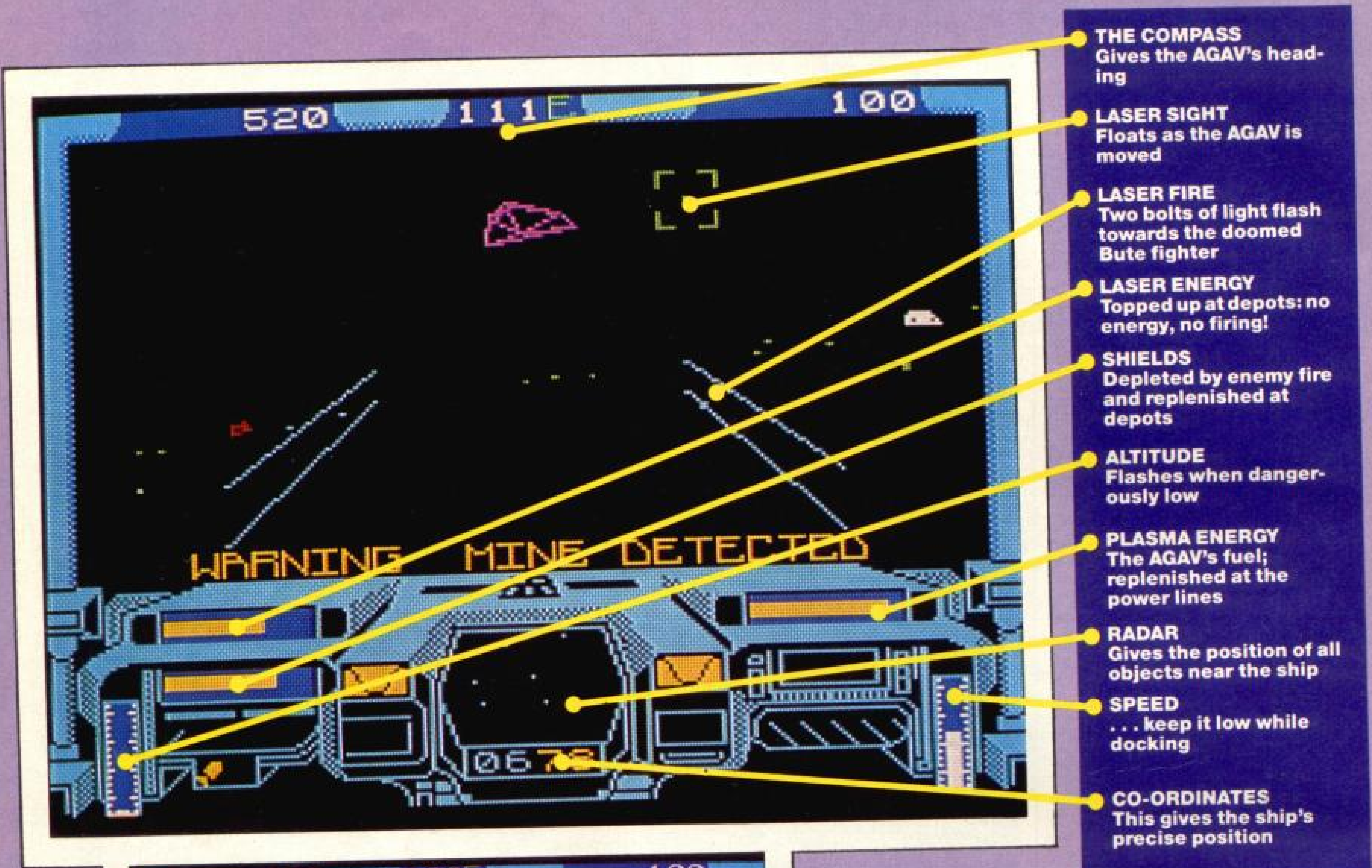
● *"This isn't perhaps the most original of games but it is good fun all the same. Legging it around the largish playing area trying to get out does get extremely frustrating after a couple of goes as it is very difficult to actually die, but you can get trapped in small spaces, so you have to about the game. The graphics are very good, each of the characters is very well drawn and animated and the backgrounds are colourful. The sound is also good, there are a few effects during the game and a lovely tune on the title screen. Future Knight isn't the best game around at the moment but it is certainly well worth a look."*

● "I tried to look at this with as open a mind as possible, bearing in mind GREMLIN'S past record, but unfortunatly, I was somewhat disappointed. The graphics are very good, and well up to the usual high standard of GREMLIN, but unfortunatly, the game struck me as being a very run of the mill one. The most enjoyable thing that I found about it was the way in which you characters stops, knocks on the screen, and starts dancing if you leave him alone for too long a period of time. Of course, if you like this sort of game, then I think you'll be OK."

## COMMENTS

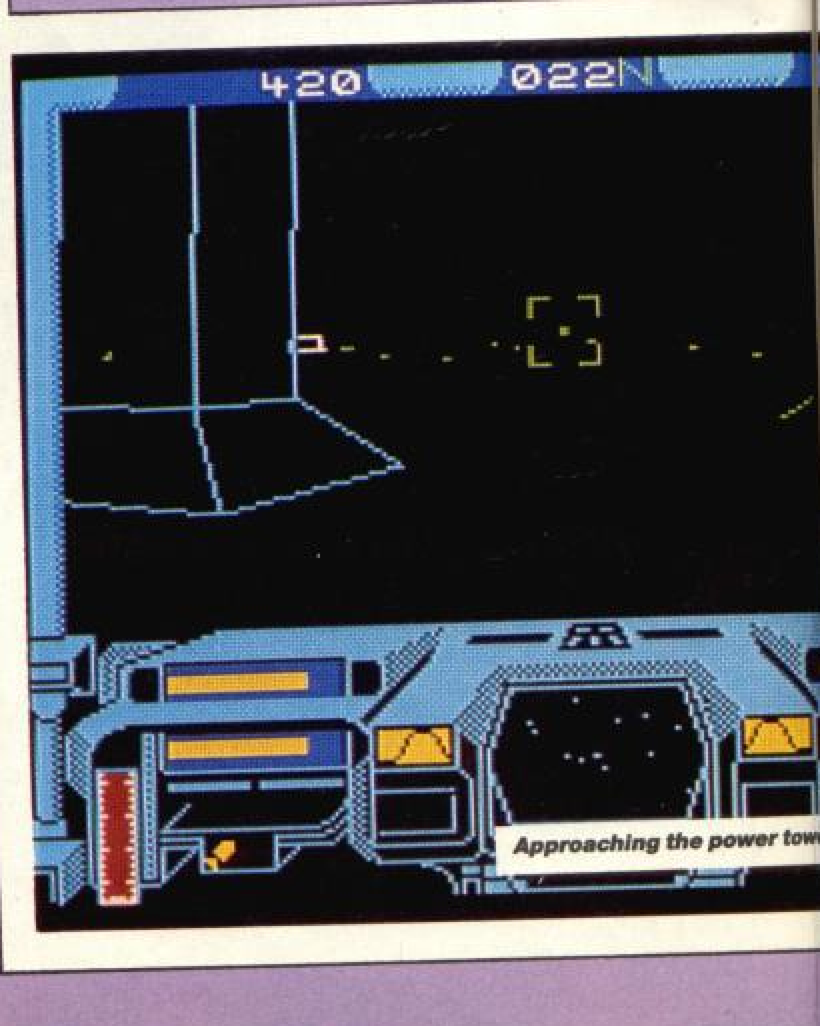
**Control keys:** left Q; right W;up P;down L; Fire SPACE; use, U; abort, BREAK
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** pretty slick
**Use of colour:** effective
**Graphics:** detailed with good shading
**Sound:** nice tune if you play it on the 128, a bit beepy on the 48K
**Skill levels:** one
**Screens:** 160
**General rating:** not up to Gremlin's usual standards

| | |
|---|---|
| Use of computer | 79% |
| Graphics | 80% |
| Playability | 76% |
| Getting started | 77% |
| Addictive qualities | 73% |
| Value for money | 74% |
| Overall | 76% |










*Approaching the power tow…*



**Producer: Rainbird**
Retail Price: **£14.95**
Author: **Realtime Software**

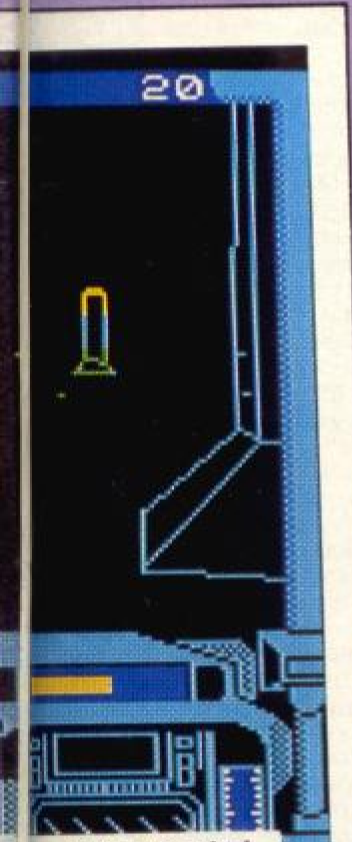
# S·T·A·R·G·L·I·D·E·R

A CRASH Smash

For many years, the planet of Novenia was at peace. An automated defence system, called the Sentinels, kept unwelcome callers from outer space at bay. These huge monoliths didn't ask questions — they just blew away anything that they didn't like the look of.

All went well until the Sentinels destroyed a harmless flock of protected interplanetary migratory birds called Stargliders. The Sentinels were immediately reprogrammed not to blow these rather bizarre creatures to bits. Although ecologically sound, this produced a fatal flaw in the Novenian defence system — the ruthless Egrons attacked in ships disguised as Stargliders, thus fooling the defence computers. Once past the Sentinels, there was no stopping them. Novenia relied on the Sentinels and did not maintain any conventional forces. So Novenia was conquered.

Jason and Katra, two Sentinel repair workers, witnessed the death and destruction from the safety of one of Novenia's moons. The two heroes embark on a mission — to destroy the invading aliens singlehanded. All they have at their disposal is an obsolete museum piece of a fighter equipped with lasers and capable of carrying two missiles.



...it's time to refuel

### CRITICISM

**" Starglider, without doubt, ranks amongst the best games to grace the Spectrum's screen. The whole of the game is excellently done, and its presentation and packaging has been executed in a most professional manner. The loading screen sets the player up for the game-of-the-year on any computer. If you've seen the Atari ST** Starglider **then you'll be amazed at the Spectrum version because they're so alike! The sound effects are extremely good, and very effective. The number of frames of animation is unbelievable — it's just so smooth and incredibly fast. The options are vast and very useful. There's certainly a pot of gold at the end of the** RAINBIRD **(Eugh!). "**

There are more than sixteen different types of Egron craft to destroy and each craft must be dealt with in a slightly different way. The action takes place on the blasted wastes of what was once Novenia, and the antiquated fighter is guided around the dust-laden atmosphere using a co-ordinate system which divides the planet's surface into a grid of 100 units by 100 units.

Two types of sight are available — fixed and floating — and a choice is made before the game starts. Floating sights affect the control of the ship — the AGAV 'follows' the sights. Fixed sights remain in the centre of the screen, and the ship must be manoeuvred until the target appears in target square. An optional centering system may be enabled or disabled at the start of the game — automatic centering can be effected on either the vertical or the horizontal axis, in all directions, or not at all. With fully automatic centering, the fighter returns to flying straight and level when it is left to its own devices.

Two versions of the game have been programmed — the 'standard' 48K version and a much enhanced 128K/+2 version. The enhanced version includes digitised speech (the dulcet tones of one Clare Edgeley) a three-voice title tune and missions that either involve destroying an invader or picking up some extra bolt-on goodies for the fighter. Custom add-ons include super missiles with more fuel, power packs which temporarily dispense with the need to refuel, and a rear view mirror (presumably so that the ancient craft will pass its MOT!) In the enhanced version, particularly unpleasant meanies are encountered on the higher levels, to even out the advantage which the extra equipment gives.

At the start of the game, the airborne ground attack vehicle (AGAV) piloted by Jason and Katra is flying close to a repair depot. These depots are vital to the success of the mission. They rotate slowly, and the entry port on one side must be entered accurately, at low speed. Once inside, damage is repaired and a missile, if available, is attached to the craft. Each depot produces one missile every few minutes, but there is never more than one available each time the AGAV is docked. Before relaunching, the depot computer can be accessed for information on enemy craft.

### CRITICISM

**" Wizz neeaw zoom! ... Zap zap zap kapow! Budda budda budda. This really is my kind of game. It combines a fantastic shoot em up with a bit of brain work (but not as much as** Starstrike II**). From the word go it is easy to get totally enthralled in the world of Novenia, especially if you read the 64 page novelette (if you can tear yourself away from the game!) I can see myself playing this for weeks. Graphically,** Starglider **is the best vector graphics game to date — my only niggle is that in a game of this quality it's a shame that no one's worked out a way of erasing objects and horizons that appear behind other objects. The sound is a bit disappointing: there are no tunes but the effects are well used. If you are a fan of shoot em ups or vector graphics then this must take pride of place in your software collection. Go and buy it, you won't regret it. "**

After re-launching, it is vital to make a note of the co-ordinates of the depot so the AGAV can return when necessary. The only vital commodity not provided by the depots is energy — this has to be collected by using the inductive power lines which criss-cross the planet's surface (they can be recognised by the tall towers that support them.) Collecting power requires delicate manoeuvring, and there are usually plenty of meanies scattered around trying to stop the AGAV tanking up.

The AGAV's instrument panel includes horizontal bars that reveal the status of the shields, reserves of power and fuel levels, while two vertical indicators give the height and speed of the craft. The height bar flashes red if the craft is close to the ground and in danger of crashing — hitting the ground does the shields no good at all.

When a missile is fired, the view is supplied by a remote camera on board the missile. Missiles have a limited amount of fuel, fly very fast and have a wide turning circle. Consequently, a missile must be homed in on its target before the fuel runs out — so the target must be fairly close. Generally, there's not usually time to circle round and try again . . .

It takes three missile hits to destroy an Egron Starglider. As the AGAV can only carry two missiles at once you've got to go and find a depot with a missile ready, dock, and then find the Starglider again, even if you score two direct hits. The reward comes when an Egron Starglider is destroyed — an 'instant replay' of the moment of destruction appears on screen.

After 10,000 points have been scored, the game moves to the next level where the Egron craft take more hits before being destroyed. . . .

### CRITICISM

**" Wowee!! The last time I saw a game that made me go into the same sort of totally freaked-out ultra-amazed mode was** Starstrike II**, also by** REALTIME**. This one is even better, to the extent that I don't think I can find fault with it. The animated vector graphics are just sooo great! The whole thing is destined to become a classic. I think I'd go as far as to say that if this was in the arcades, then I spend a fair bit of time throwing ten pences into it. If you're the not-so-proud owner of a 48K machine, then I suggest that you go and buy it now. If on the other hand, you've got a Plus 2, then buy this, and spend the rest of your existence playing it (until the follow up, anyway!) "**

# S·T·A·R·G·L·I·D·E·R

A CRASH Smash



**COMMENTS**

**Control keys:** redefinable: up, down, left, right, accelerate, decelerate, launch missile, fire, pause. (128K version only: launch super missile)
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** slick
**Use of colour:** helpful
**Graphics:** incredible speed and animation
**Sound:** good effects
**Skill levels:** one
**Screens:** wraparound play area
**General rating:** It's hard to imagine a better shoot em up

| | |
|---|---|
| Use of computer | 96% |
| Graphics | 95% |
| Playability | 95% |
| Getting started | 94% |
| Addictive qualities | 96% |
| Value for money | 92% |
| Overall | 95% |




*The is the view provided by a remote camera mounted in a missile as it homes in on Starglider One*




*During refuelling, you're a sitting duck. Thankfully, this missile just missed your fighter*

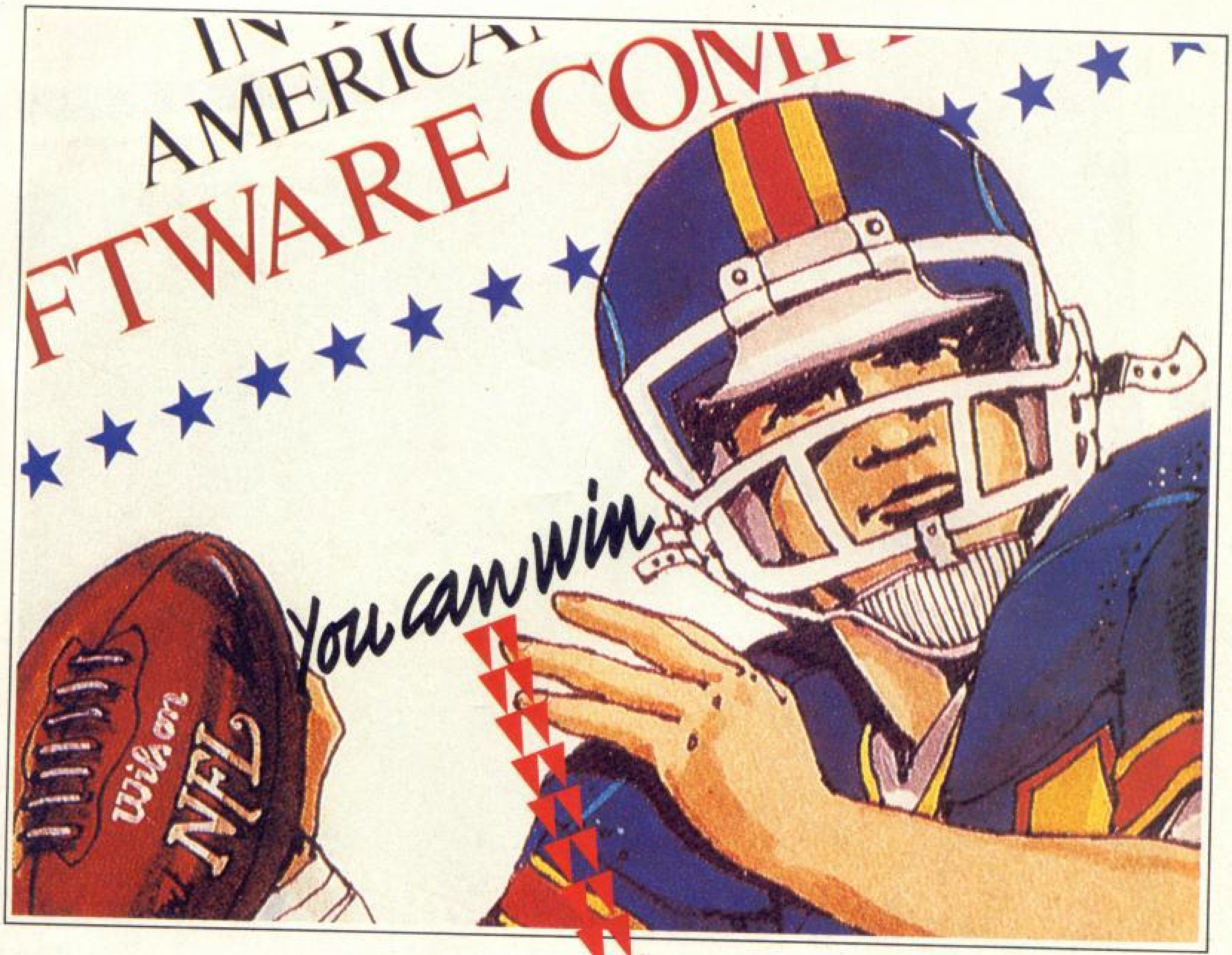
**CRITICISM**

"Starglider on the 128K is far far superior to the 48K version and indeed to any other 128K games that I've seen to date. I had difficulty believing that a humble (but fat) Spectrum could actually produce a game this fast and with so many sound effects. Graphically, this is no step forward from the 48K, except that you get a few more nasties on higher levels. The sound is the best that I have ever heard on a Spectrum: there is an excellent David Lowe tune on the title screen and some worthy effects during play. Above all, there is speech the like of which has never been heard before on the Spectrum (it even knocks the stuffing out of the Atari ST version). The voice is recognisably that of nice Clare Edgeley from RAINBIRD who actually gives you useful bits of information (like when you are going to die) during the game. If you are a 128K owner who's getting a bit fed up 'cos there isn't really any neat software around for your machine this will restore your faith. Halleluja!"

**COMMENTS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Use of computer | 97% |
| Graphics | 95% |
| Playability | 96% |
| Getting started | 94% |
| Addictive qualities | 98% |
| Value for money | 95% |
| Overall | 97% |

The 128K version represents quite an enhancement on the 48K game. It deserves a separate critical comment and a revised set of ratings



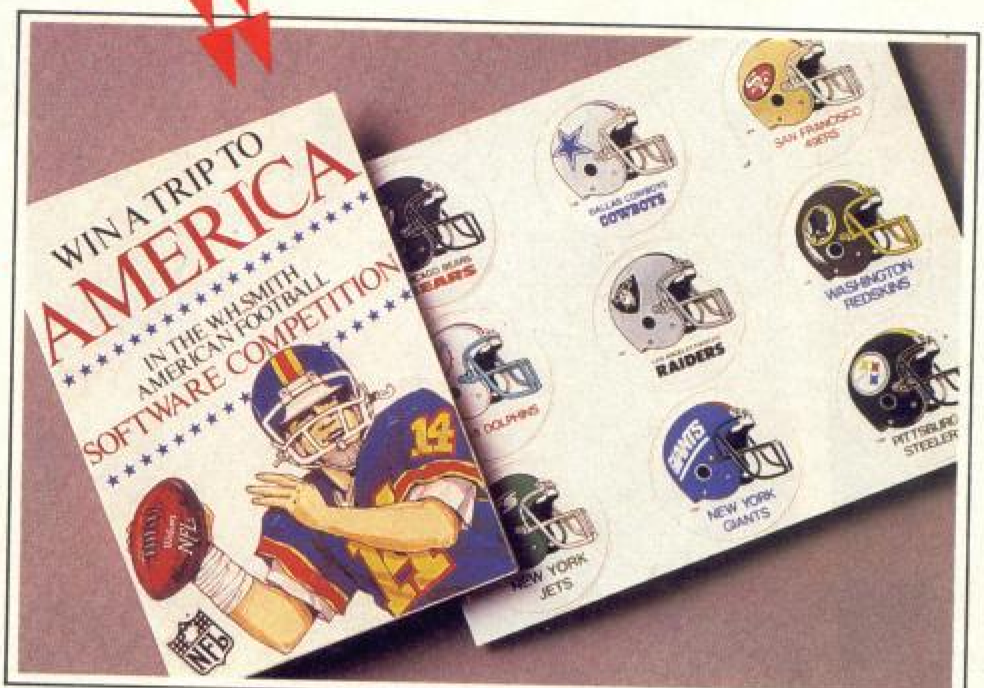

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WHSMITH WHSMITH

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*Jonathan explores the dining room. I think those dogies fanc dining early tonight*






*A staricase deep in the bowels of the castle. The cofin grows in size, Jonathan's close to a sticky end*



**Producer: Piranha**
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Design Design**

# N·O·S·F·E·R·A·T·U

A CRASH Smash

Nosferatu The Vampyre has been dragged out, dusted down and brought up to date. Those who remember the Twentieth Century Fox film of the same name will know that Nosferatu was the only Vampyre to have his deadly fangs firmly in the front of his mouth, and not at the side like the Bela Lugosis and Peter Cushings that were to follow.

*Nosferatu* is divided into three sections, and predictably enough one section has to be completed before the player can progress to the next. The first part of the game takes place in Dracula's castle. Jonathan Harker is an estate agent's minion. The Count wishes to move from his drafty house on the hill. When Jonathan gets to the castle, his worst fears are realised. Being a smart man, he realises that if Nosferatu moves into the peaceful town of Wismar, the inhabitants of this sleepy village could soon become his unwitting victims and turn into Vampyres themselves. Eeek!

Unfortunately, Jonathan has made a slight faux-pas. He has left the deeds to the house on the dining table in the Count's castle, and when he returns they are gone. Mr. Harker must recover these deeds and escape from the Count's castle to complete section one of the game.

Apart from Nosferatu, there are other nasty things for the poor man to wrestle with. Vampyre bats, sewer rats and large rabid wolves are all a potential threat as they guard the castle while the Count takes his beauty sleep. These creatures will sap away Jonathan's life energy if they make contact with him. This life force is represented by an ever-growing coffin at the bottom of the screen, when the coffin is completed he dies. Apart from these creatures, the Count has also conjured up hallucinations which haunt and trick Jonathan as he stumbles around the castle's rooms in search of the deeds.

Food can be picked up along the way to replenish his energy, and the crucifixes, swords and candles which can also be picked up all help to make his task a mite easier. The time of day or night is shown by a change in room colours and by a chart at the bottom of the screen. It is not essential for Jonathan to have the deeds before he leaves the castle, but if he does have them it will make his task a lot easier in the next section

In level two the action takes place in the town of Wismar and the player controls three characters; Jonathan Harker again, his wife Lucy and a chap called van Helsing. Play can be switched between the three by using keys 1 through to 3.

Nosferatu has been lured to Wismar by Lucy's unique powers of attraction. While in the town he takes good advantage of the healthy population and begins to feed off them. However, unbeknown to Lucy's husband and van Helsing, she is the only one who can kill Nosferatu. This makes things tricky in the third section. The two men must make short work of the hundreds of sewer rats which swarm around, while at the same time fending off the inhabitants who have already been turned into Vampyres by the Count.

In section three the player controls just Lucy. The object of this level is to lure Nosferatu to Lucy's house for the Final Conflict. Jonathan and van Helsing are still unaware that Lucy alone can kill the Vampyre and are united in keeping her away from danger. The two men must be locked in the house while Nosferatu is lured to Lucy's bedroom where she must keep him with her until dawn. If you are sucessful, the game ends with Nosferatu's quick demise at the first rays of the sun!

## CRITICISM

**"This really is a very good game. The graphics are very detailed and originally drawn. Things like the bats and other animals are extremly well animated — which makes *Nosferato* a very pretty game to play — but there is much more than meets the eye, like trap doors and secret passages, which once found open the whole game up. The game is very easy to get into, although I felt the controls were a touch unresponsive, considering the bats move at such a fast pace. After a very hard session of playing I found it very hard to get anywhere near level two. The options are fairly vast, although the old game option proved pretty useless. This is an excellent variant on an old game."**

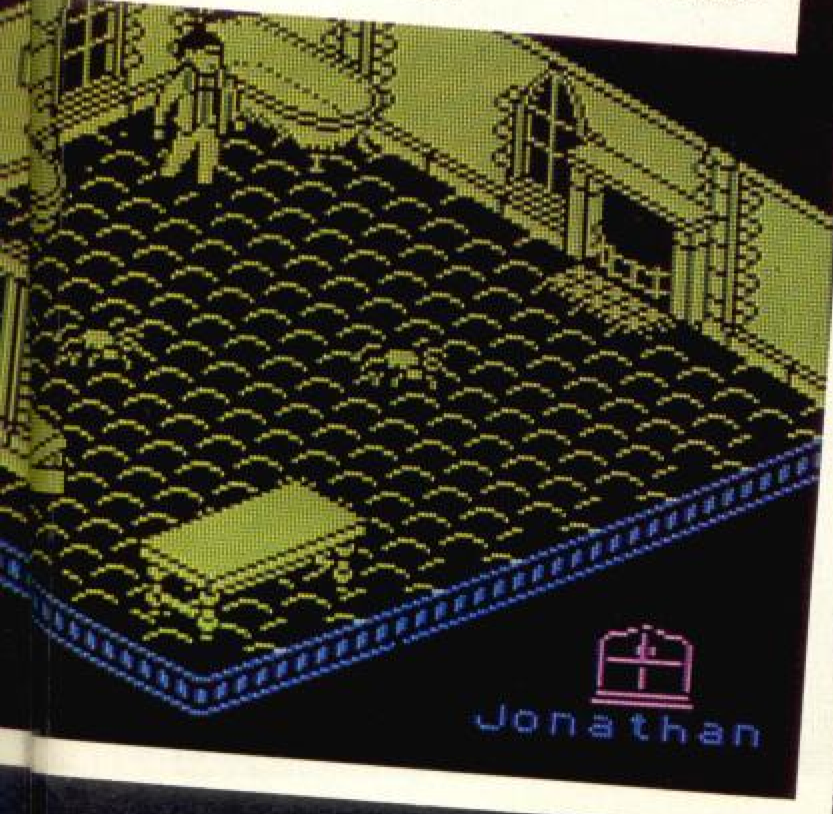
## CRITICISM

**"Although bearing inital similarities to DESIGN DESIGN'S earlier release, *Nexor*, the gameplay goes much beyond the simple wander around and collect object idea. The plot is actually very involved and complex. What's more, it's a real toughie to play. The most notable occurance of this is when the bats attack you - really go for your neck, the little horrors! Despite not be able to get very far into the games I'm sure I'll play it again as there appears so much just waiting to be discovered. I have no hesitation in recommending it to anyone."**

## CRITICISM

**"To begin with it is very easy to dismiss *Nosferatu* as just another filmation game with hardly any content, but if you stick with it for a few goes I'm sure that it will absorb you as completely as it did me. Graphically this has to be one of the most detailed games that I have ever played, nothing has been left out. The characters move around in the usual excellent filmation fashion and use of colour is understandably limated. The sound is also very good with lots of effects and a lovely tune on the title screen. All in all I'm glad to see that PIRANAH can still produce excellent games."**

*Another tricky room. Some rather terrifying looking spiders have just crawled out of the bath*




## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** definable
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** somewhat slugish
**Use of colour:** understandably limited
**Graphics:** detailed with good animation
**Sound:** tune which can be switched on or off during play
**Skill levels:** three
**Screens:** 113
**General rating:** love at first byte

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | 90% |
| **Graphics** | 93% |
| **Playability** | 92% |
| **Getting started** | 87% |
| **Addictive qualities** | 92% |
| **Value for money** | 91% |
| **Overall** | **91%** |

# SPACE HARRIER

**Producer: Elite**
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Keith Burkhill**

Anyone who is remotely familiar with amusement arcades will have heard of *Space Harrier*. In fact so imposing is this arcade machine that it would be very difficult to miss. The arcade version incorporates a huge hydraulic arm on which is mounted a seat and a video screen. Apparently it's quite an experience to play. Unfortunately the Spectrum version doesn't include such fancy sundries.

You control a futuristic soldier, a Space Harrier, who is pitting his witts against all manner of nasty aliens who are threatening to take over. One man against so many seems a fairly tall order. Your soldier is equipped with a jet pack and a powerful gun. This enables him to rocket about at great speeds while blasting away at the opposition.

The basic idea is to blast anything that hurtles towards your character from the back of the screen, whether it's a mean and ugly nasty or the odd bit of countryside. The person perspective action scrolls towards the player at a fair old rate. All the aliens zoom in from the far distant horizon and your soldier has to swoop and duck around blasting them out of the skies. Apart from the many monsters there are also landscape features that have to be avoided. Trees, rocks and large stone obelisks shoot out to meet you and then must be manoeuvred around if success is to be yours.

There are sixteen levels to the game. Each one is identified by it's distinctive colouring and different graphics. In the later levels the action gets quite furious with inanimate objects hurling at you. The Space Harrier must blast his/her way through all the nasties on a particular level, amassing the biggest score possible. At the end of each level there is a super baddie or baddies who must be conquered before your little soldier sets his feet down on the ground again and awaits the perils of the next level.

Although the majority of the demons in this game are nasty there is an exception. If you get up to level ten, a cute cuddly dragon appears who is obviously very friendly. When he appears in the later levels your Space Harrier gets to ride on his back and together they wreak havock on the attacking monsters. Gone is his powerful laser and the Harrier and his dragonesque mate simply drive into the approaching monsters and destroy them that way. In fact, huge bonus scores can be achieved on this level

Your Space Harrier has nine lives in the game. One of these is lost every time he gets shot by one of the monsters. For those that know the Arcade version intimately, the ending is along the same lines.

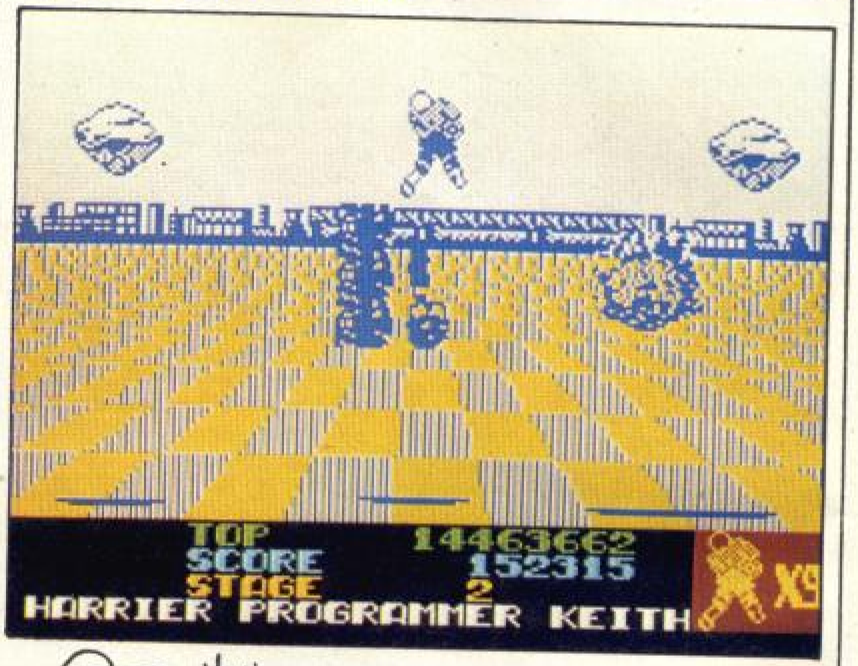
## CRITICISM

● **"Wow! This game moves at a pace! The first level is fairly easy, but even that's hectic first time through, but as you start to clock levels, things really do start getting fast. The score table gave me a massive shock the first time I saw it, but I was fairly pleasantly surprised when my scores went into seven figures after ten minutes playing. Although it's quite easy, *Space Harrier* isn't the worst ELITE conversion, and though being far from the best, might be worth considering if you're a big fan of the arcade version."**

● *"The graphics on the arcade version were always what people talked about — but the Spectrum version has tried to make them too detailed, and the result looks very messy indeed. I found that it was very hard to see what was coming up the screen at you — and the difference between the missiles and obstacles was very little when moving at such a speed as it does. To me the Spectrum version shows how little actual game is in Space Harrier. I got very bored with it after only a few games. As far as I'm concerned,* ELITE *can give the seat away with it, and I still wouldn't buy the game."*

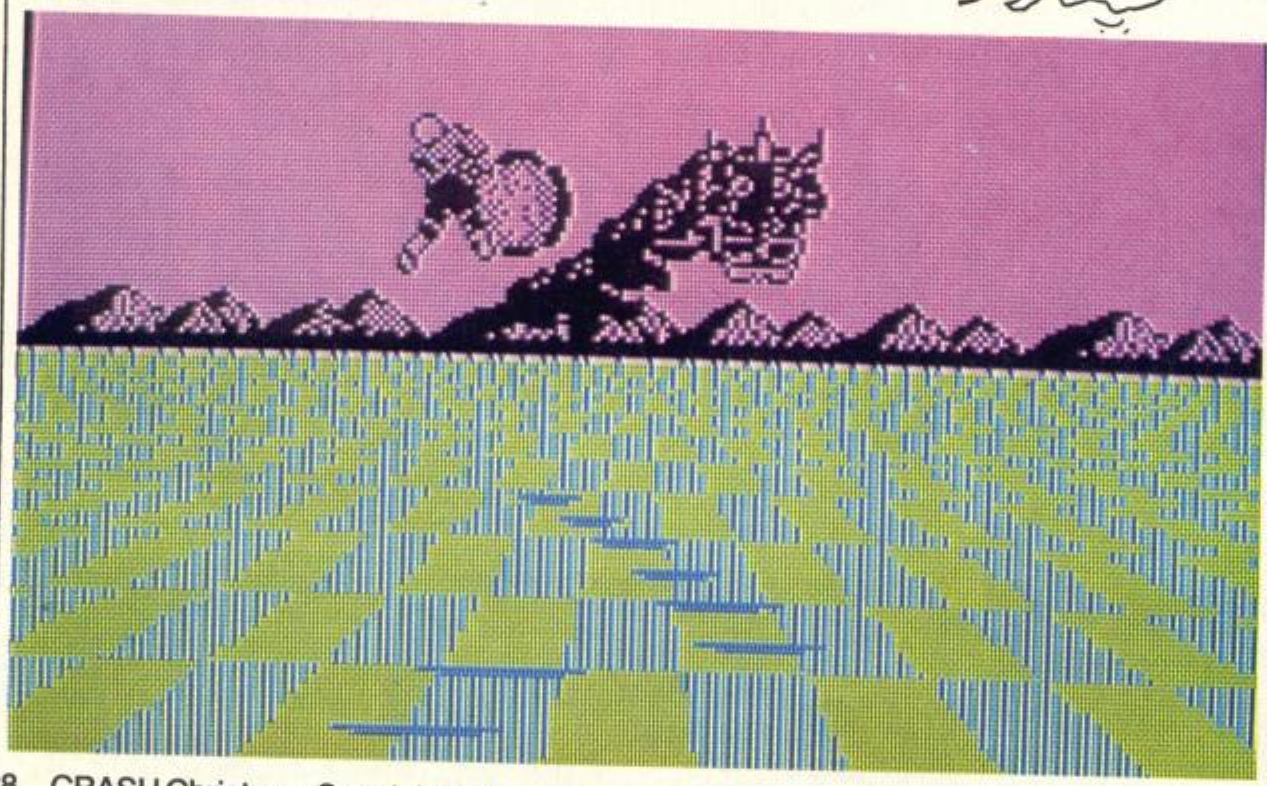
● "I really liked *Space Harrier* in the arcades but only because the machine itself jerked around on hydraulics so you got a really good sense of motion when you moved about on screen (experience not to be no. 346). This is not at all a bad version of the original, it plays at high speed and it is quite compelling. The graphics are well above average but they do tend to get a little messy at times. Your character is well drawn but I feel that he could have a few more poses to complete the flying effect. The sound is averageish, there are no tunes and the effects are mediocre only. This is yet another good shoot'em up this issue seem to be full of them (horay!).

*in stage two, the scenery changes to a city scape, but the action is still fast and furious*






*Facing up to the dragon at the end of stage one; a pretty tricky opponent*



## COMMENTS

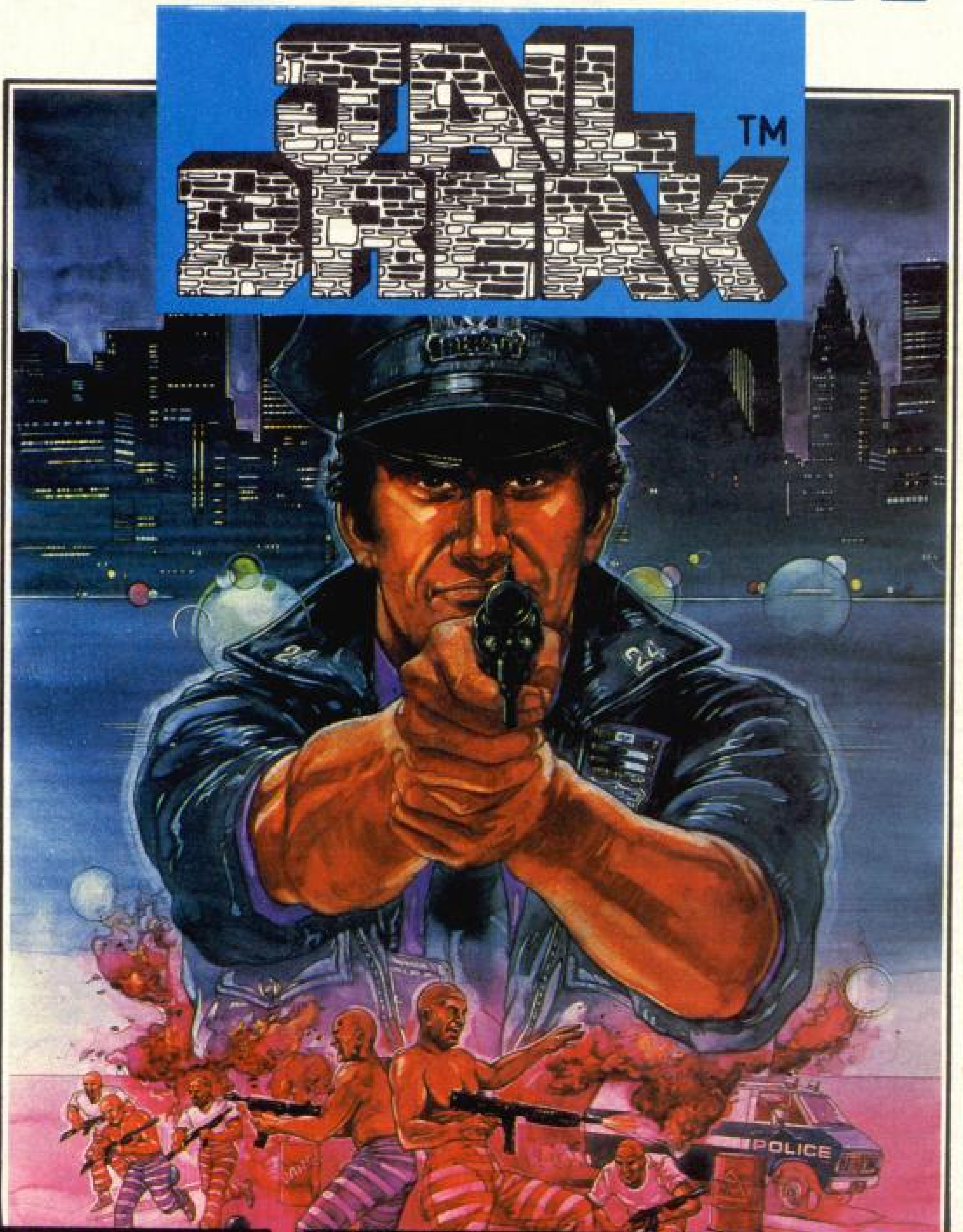
**Control keys:** definable, up, down, left, right, fire
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** pretty damn fast
**Use of colour:** vivid
**Graphics:** amazing perspective effect
**Sound:** the occasional spot effects
**Skill levels:** one
**Screens:** sixteen scrolling arenas
**General rating:** a near miss

| | |
|---|---|
| Use of computer | 75% |
| Graphics | 78% |
| Playability | 76% |
| Getting started | 76% |
| Addictive qualities | 72% |
| Value for money | 72% |
| Overall | 77% |

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Screen shots from Arcade version

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# THEY CALL ME TROOPER



**Producer:CRL**
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Colin Ajayi-Obe**

A conference between all the super powers is being held on the planet Therop. However, the sneaky Theropi, have plans for Galactic domination and have subjected the Earth Members to the Theropi's irreversible Brain Drain machine. They have been turned from loyal Earthlings into lethal exterminators working for the Theropi. However, there is one survivor from the Theropi's dastardly plans. Major R A Trooper, Squad Captain, has somehow avoided the Theropi, and now stands alone in a bid to stop their evil plans.

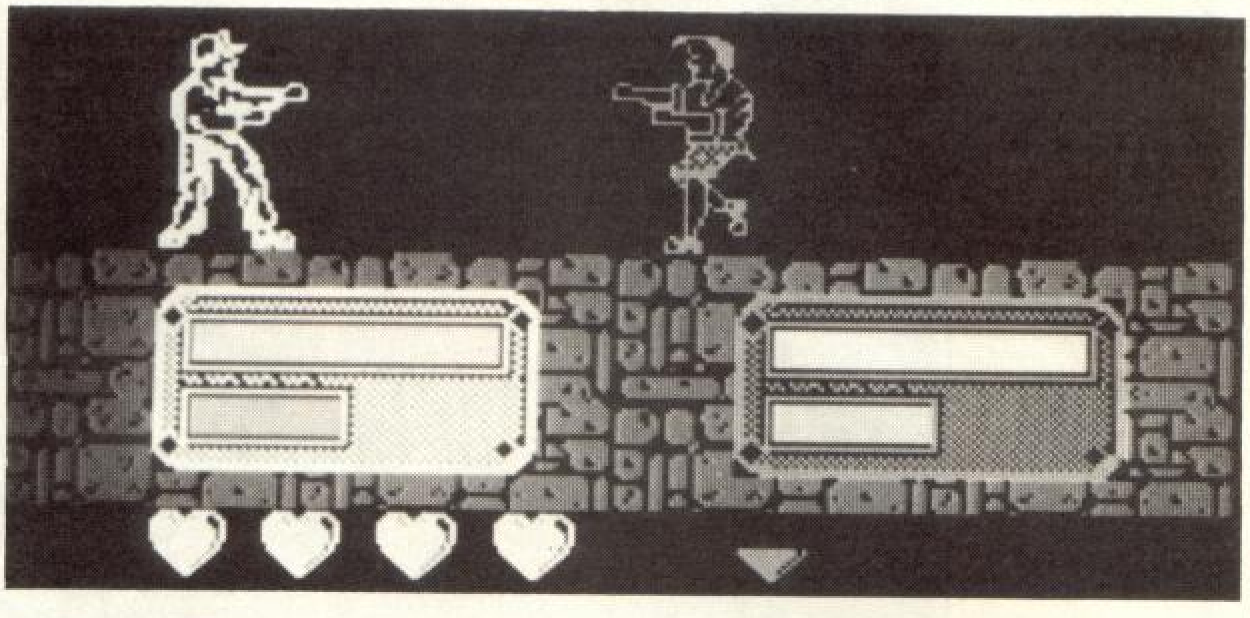
The Major, must exterminate the brainwashed Members, and escape from the planet alive. The parts of his spaceship have been scattered all over the planet's surface, so before he can even contemplate waving bye-bye to Therop, he must collect all these pieces and assemble his craft again. There are a certain number of pieces of the ship per sector. Each piece must be collected before he progresses to the next.

If Major Trooper encounters one of the green Members, he must fight them at unarmed combat, the screen automatically flips into combat mode. The action zooms in on the two fighters, and shows them greatly enlarged and in much finer detail on the screen. Using the relevant keys or joystick positions, Major Trooper has to high-kick and punch his way to victory by draining his opponent's energy and stamina. However, the Major has to watch out for his own reserves. There are two bars on the Combat screen. The blue one showing the Major's energy and the magenta one showing his stamina. The idea is to get the opponent's energy and stamina down to zero. However, if the Member gets the better of the Major, then he loses one of his lives. These lives are displayed at the bottom of the screen as hearts, and are gradually eaten away as the Major's energy is lost. When a Member has been destroyed, the Major can then progress in the game. The screen then returns to the normal view, showing the characters and background in quite small detail.

Apart from the Members, the Major also has to fight against the Theropi, natives of this strange planet. These small yellow blob like creatures can only be destroyed by shooting them. They knock over our hero and drain his energy. The planet Therop is composed of sheer cliffs and large drops into huge valleys. The Major does possess quite good jumping abilities, but some of the cliffs are just too much for him. When he comes across one of these he must find some rope and tackle. Other objects can be picked up and put into the Major's pockets. These can then be used by selecting the relevant pocket.




*The combat screens, the Major has to resort to a bit of GBH*



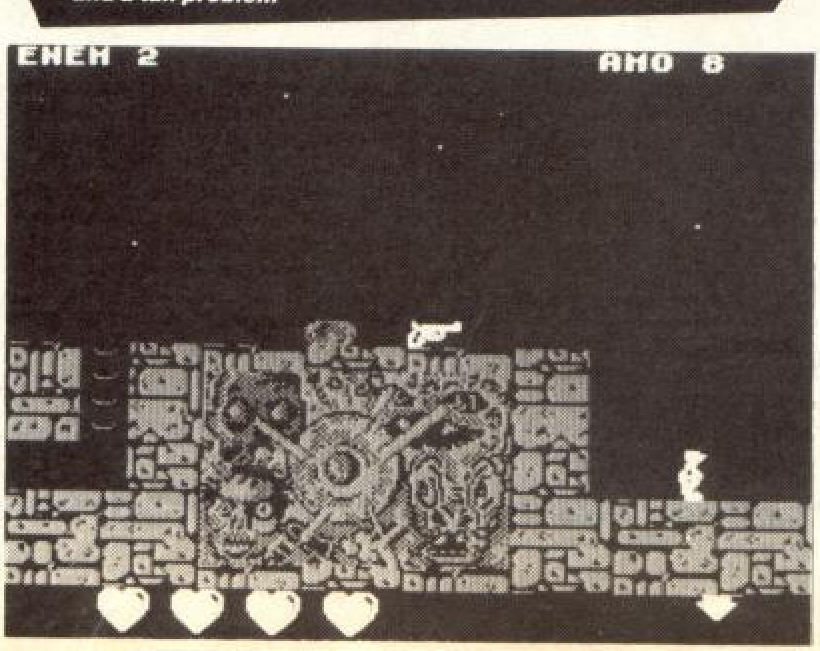
## CRITICISM

● **"I really do wish CRL would make their mind up. *Academy* is, without doubt, superb, but *Dr. What* and this one, well, a different matter entirely! The graphics of the fighting characters are excellenrt, big and well animated. There is no doubt inmy mind that the game would be vastly improved if the wasted arcade adventure part was scrapped, and the memory used was put towards improvement of the combat section. Overall, the combat section has potential, but the opther part is a disaster."**

● *"This is the first 128K only Speccy game that I've seen, if the rest are of the same quality as this then I'll take back my old'n rusty 16K door stop Sinclair any day. C'mon CRL surely a +2 can do a little more than this. Graphically the overall effect is shoddy: small undetailed badly animated characters and a garish use of colour. The sound too is well below average for the 128K, there are a few average tunes and minimal use of sound effects. The game at first seems as if it could be fun but after a few plays it does get very boring."*

● "I was bemused with this game at first, but after some help from a colleague I got well into the game — I would have been stuck without him! As a game designed specifically for the +2 I was amazed to see that there is no Sinclair joystick option — you have to define the keys for the joystick — is this why it didn't get a Sinclair Quality Control sticker? The game contains some good features; such as throwing the rope and the dying effects.

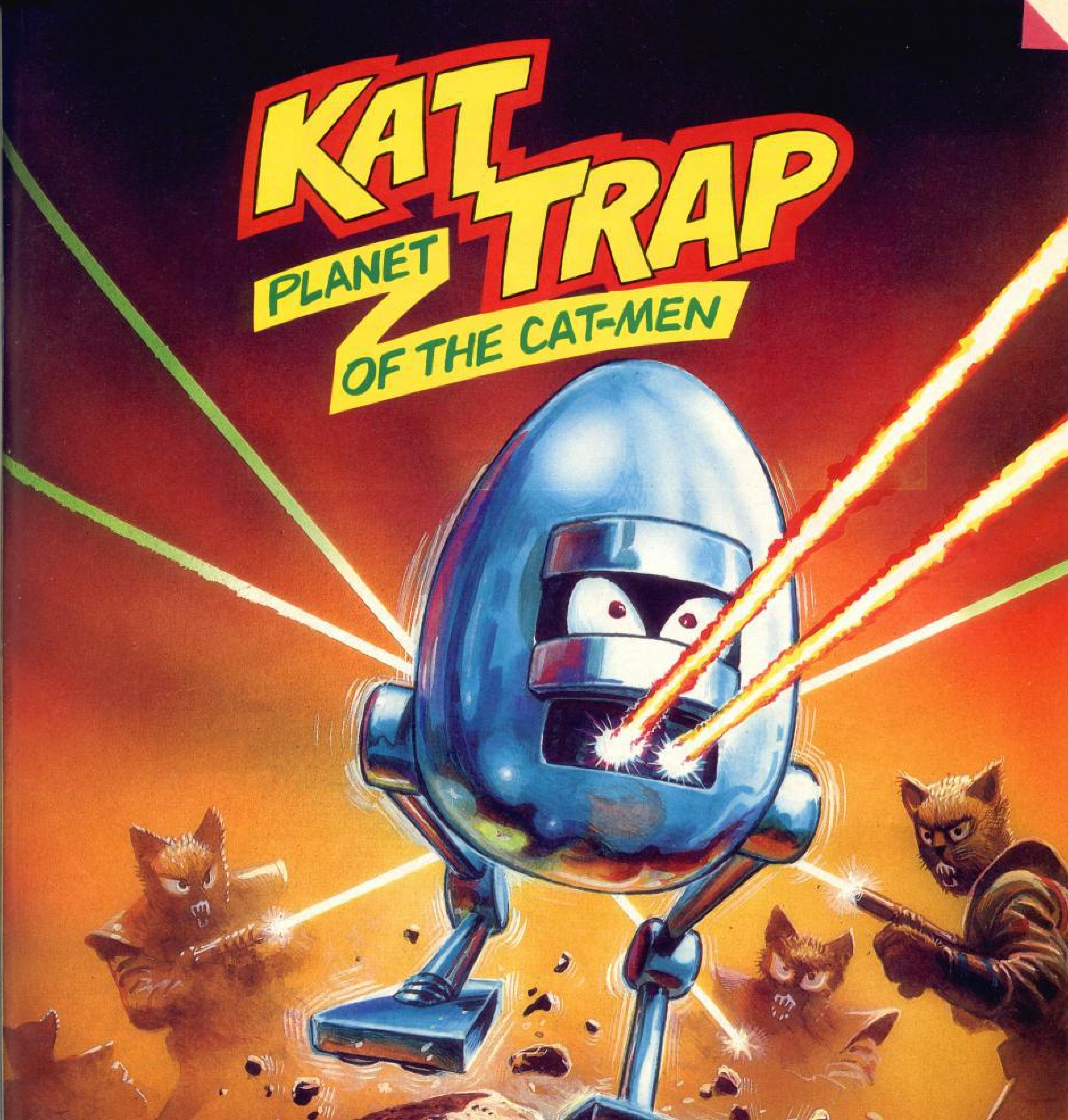
*Now how the heck do I get out of here. The start of Trooper, and a tall problem*




## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** definable; up, down, left, right, fire/punch, jump, flying kick/hold, high kick/pick up
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Sinclair
**Keyboard play:** hard to get the hang of at first
**Use of colour:** uninspired
**Graphics:** not much detail
**Sound:** nice tune at the beginning with spot effects throughout
**Skill levels:** one
**Screens:** 200
**General rating:** most 48k games are better than this

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | 54% |
| **Graphics** | 47% |
| **Playability** | 47% |
| **Getting started** | 53% |
| **Addictive qualities** | 46% |
| **Value for money** | 42% |
| **Overall** | **46%** |




Kat Trap is the winner of the "Crash Magazine" 'Genesis' competition. This game was selected out of 4000 entries and has been programmed by the top rated Design Design team, (need we say more).

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# FAIRLIGHT II: TRIAL OF DARKNESS

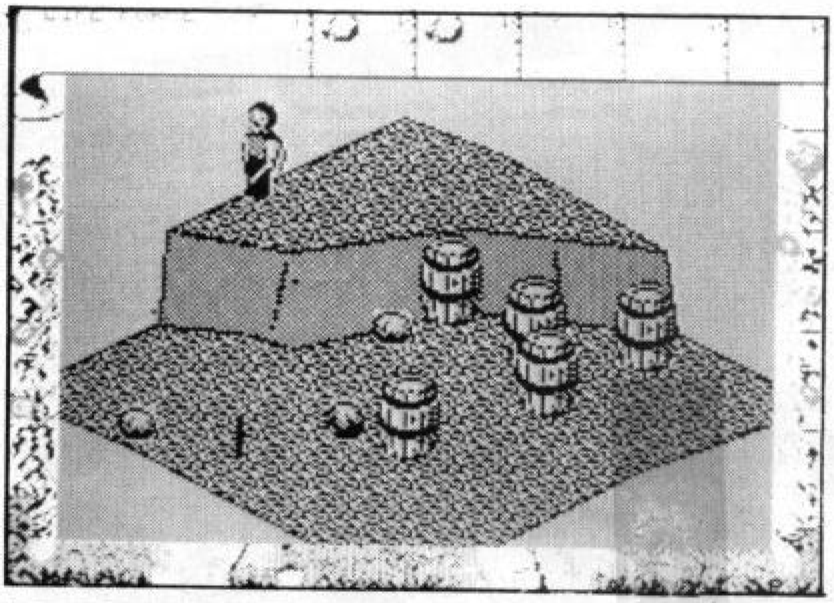
**Producer: The Edge**
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Bo Jangeborg**

**A**bout a year after the first *Fairlight* stormed the Spectrum games market, Bo Jangeborg and the team from THE EDGE have come up with the sequel.

The land of Fairlight has been decaying over many thousands of years, ever since the good King Avars who ruled over the land was murdered. When the King was slain, Fairlight slipped into the gloom and despair in which it is still trapped today. However, legend tells of a wizard who will one day be born to free the land from despair. In the original *Fairlight*, your character, Isvar was apparently called and told to seek out the book of Light which will help bring Fairlight back to its former glory. However, in the sequel it becomes apparent that you were cruely deceived. Instead of Sergar you in fact gave the Book of Light to the Dark Lord who can now harness its power to bring even more gloom and despair to the stricken land.

Bo Jangeborg has incorporated 3D graphics like *Fairlight*. Each object has its own mass, and obeys the laws of physics and gravity. For instance, heavier objects like large boulders take more effort to pick up than say, a small piece of food. Heavier objects will also travel less far when they are pushed than lighter ones. Isvar is informed in no uncertain terms if an object which he's trying to lift is actually too heavy.

Isvar is the character you play in *Fairlight II*. He must roam around the outside and inside of the Dark Tower, facing the foes and guards who are waiting to stop him in his mission. After all, if Isvar mucks things up this time as well, there may be no salvation for Fairlight.



*Isvar is down in a pit. There must be some way to get out with all these barrels lying around*

Once again, Isvar has five pockets which he can use to store useful objects in. Isvar starts out the game with 99 energy points and these are shown ticking down numerically by a counter at the top of the screen. Food will buck up his energy levels if they get too low.

Isvar must watch his step when he's trolling around the outside of the tower. Sheer cliffs shelve away into infinity. This power diminishes after encounters with dwarves, guards, killer wolverines and various other nasties who patrol the outside and inside the tower.

When Isvar leaves one location and moves on to another there is a short pause while the new location flashes, ready drawn onto the screen. Unlike the first version, the screen doesn't go black for a split second, but behaves more like a standard flick screen arrangement.

## CRITICISM

● **"*Fairlight II* is far too much like the first game, and even though it is faster, the second game is quite boring to play after only a few games. Basically, I think that Fairlight only impressed me and many other people because of its extremly detailed graphics but the game is much too 'ard for the basic Spectrum owner (well me atleast!). The problems in *Fairlight II* are more obscure than the first and it takes much longer to get into than the first. A decent follow up to Fairlight, but nothing different.**

● *"I hated* Fairlight *so I can't really be expected to be over the moon about this, and to tell you the truth I'm not. As far as I can see this is no real step forward from the original, there is a larger playing area and the graphics are a lot more varied but not essentially prettier. The game plays in a very similar way to the stacks of other Filmation games although the way in which different objects behave is a cute touch. If you are a fan of Fairlight then no doubt this will appeal, if not then I'd stay well clear of this."*

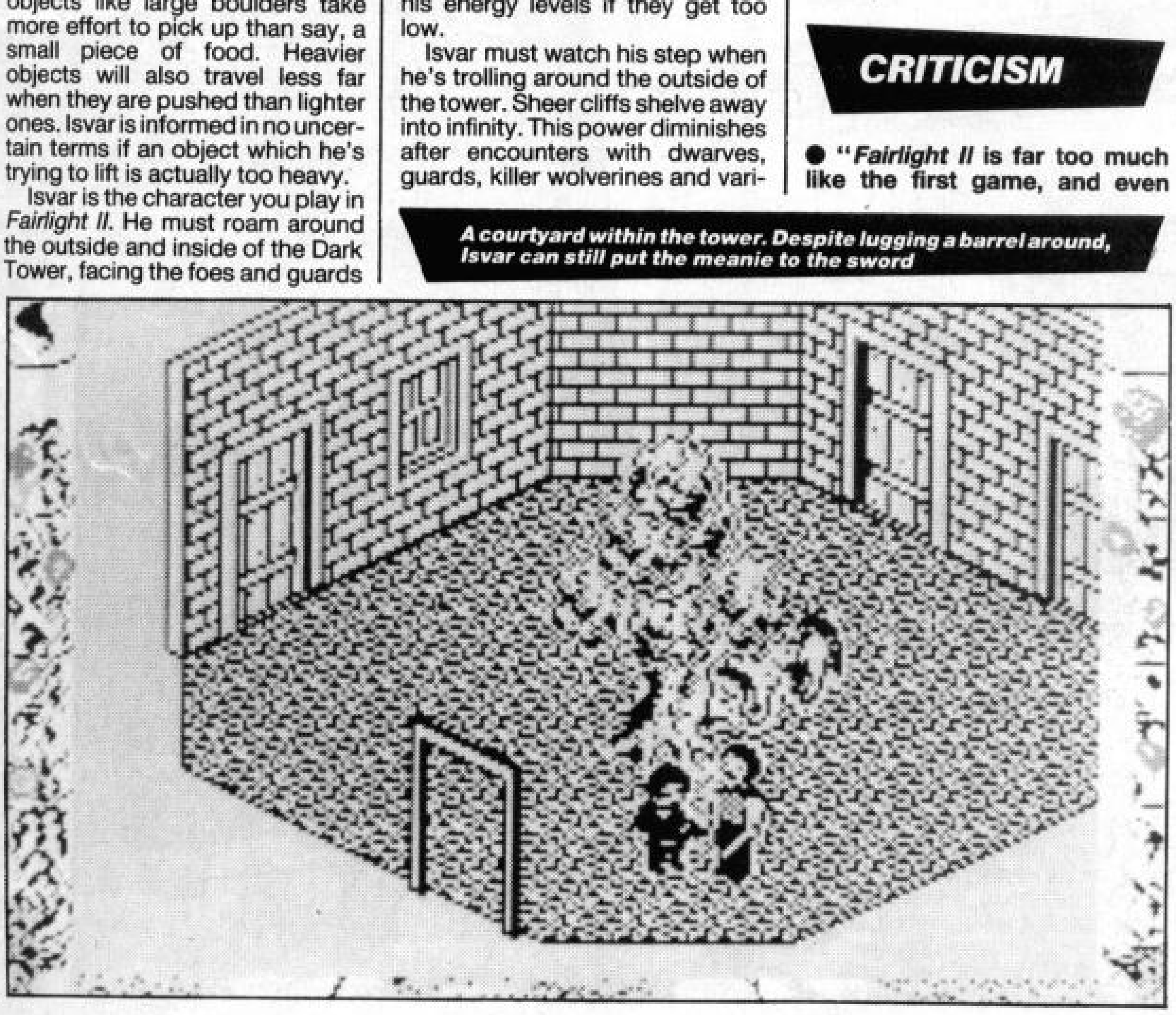
● "Oooh! Look at these graphics! Bo Jangeborg is certainly capable of producing something worthwhile, as this more than proves. The only gripes that I've got are the time it takes to flick screens, and the speed with which the character moves when there are several moving items on screen. The inertia and differing gravities of objects varing in weight is finely produced, and the whole game is one that's well worth getting."

## COMMENTS

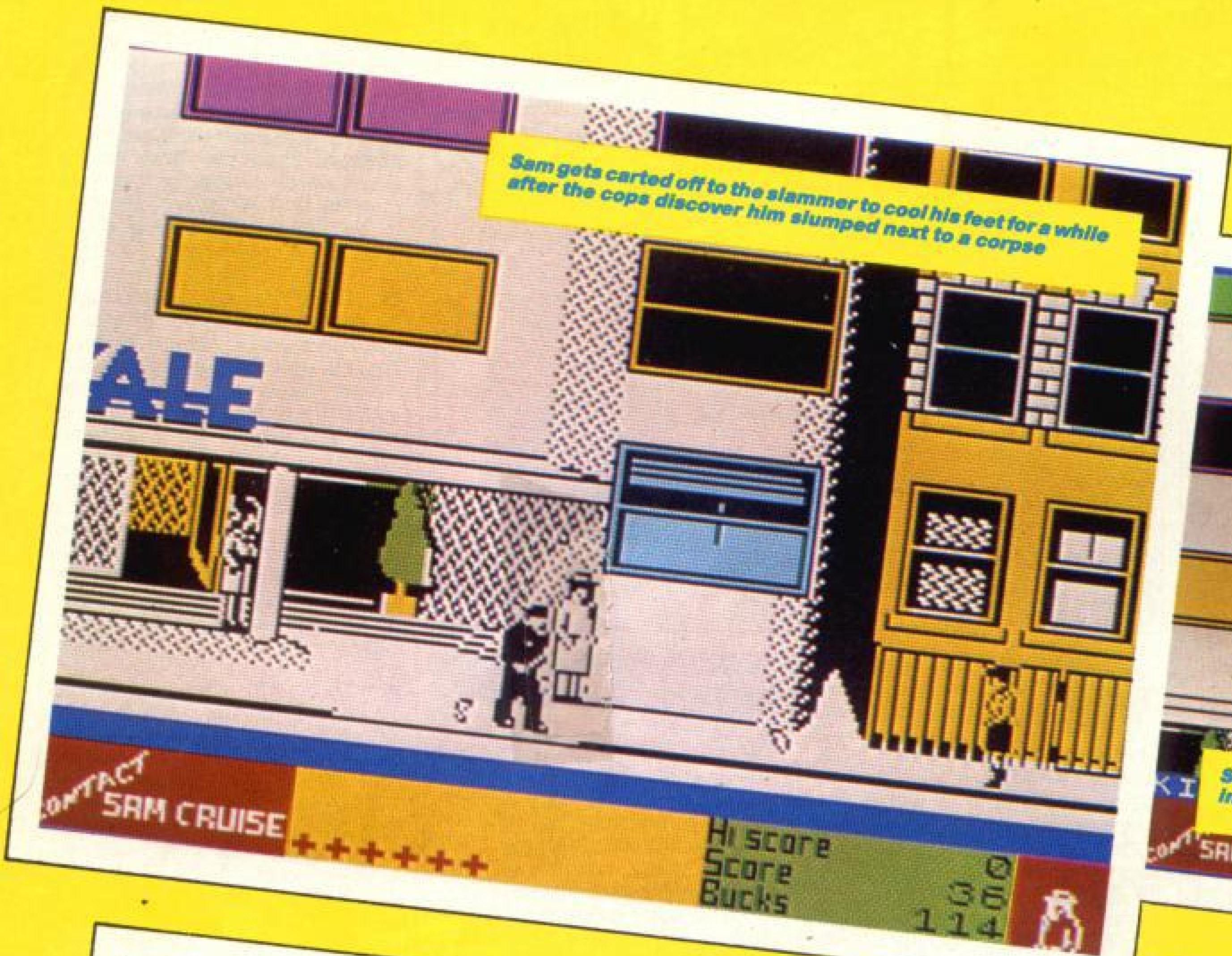
**Control keys:** Y-P up and right, G-L down and left, Q-T up and left, A-G down and right, SYM/SPACE jump, B-M fight, X-V pick up, CAPS-Z drop, 1-5 select objects, 6-7 use selected object, SYM+**SPACE pause game**
**Joystick:** Kempston, but only to control the movements of Isvar, everything else must be carried out via the keyboard
**Keyboard play:** ard to get the hang of initially due to the number of keys used in the game, but very smooth once this has been overcome
**Use of colour:** monochrome
**Graphics:** fine detail
**Sound:** atmospheric tune at the beginning, but no sound during the actual game
**Skill levels:** one
**Screens:** 160
**General rating:** good, but nothing new

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | 88% |
| **Graphics** | 92% |
| **Playability** | 75% |
| **Getting started** | 80% |
| **Addictive qualities** | 80% |
| **Value for money** | 82% |
| **Overall** | **81%** |

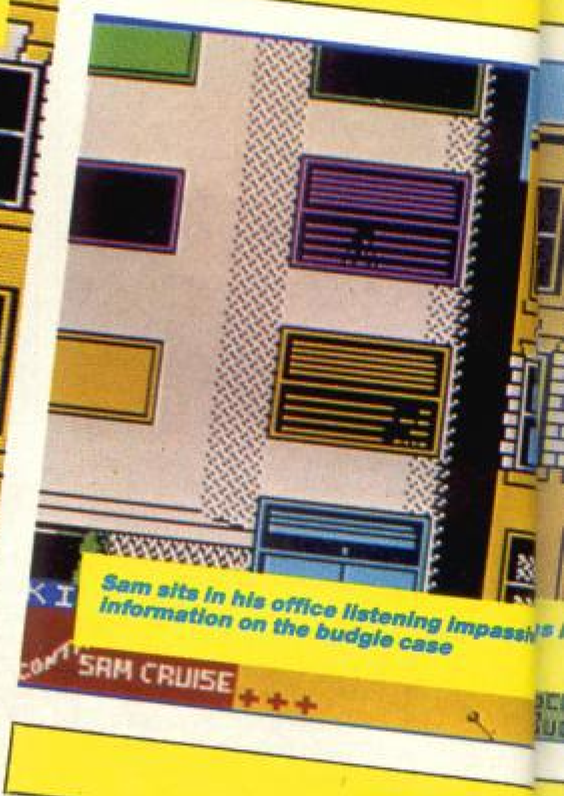
*A courtyard within the tower. Despite lugging a barrel around, Isvar can still put the meanie to the sword*



# C·O·N·T·A·C·T




Sam gets carted off to the slammer to cool his feet for a while after the cops discover him slumped next to a corpse




Sam sits in his office listening impassi[...] information on the budgie case




A sticky end for Sam as the mob throw him off the roof. He should have chosen a better disguise when he dropped in on the bad guy's H.Q.






# S·A·M C·R·U·I·S·E




...ively ...s he gets more




**I**t was just another day in the office. The sun was hot as it streamed in through the venetian blind, making zebra stripes on the desk. The whole city felt as if it was embalmed and I felt myself drifting off into an uneasy sleep. Suddenly I was awakened by the telephone ringing. It was a foxy dame called Lana. She wanted me to meet her on the top of the Hotel Royal. Said she had something important to tell me. Frankly the whole thing stank but doesn't everything in this line of work? I took my hat and coat and set off into those mean streets on the case of the Bali Budgie.

MICROSPHERE, the people that brought you *Skool Daze* and *Back To Skool* has moved to the world of Raymond Chandler for its latest inspiration.

In the game Sam has to solve a case. By following clues and riddles along the way in true detective fashion he has to try and piece together the facts and solve the mystery. However, snipers and inevitable gangland heavies are out in force to get him. Unconcerned passers-by go about their day to day business as bullets whizz around from the hidden guns.

There are various ways in which Sam can fail in his mission such as running out of money or getting chucked off a very tall building by the Mafia. The Mafia may be fairly easy to avoid, but everything in this game coasts money, even walking around. The money acts as your energy level. Sam starts the game with 50 dollars in his pocket but funds can be topped up by somersaulting onto stray dollar bills which occasionally float along the sidewalks.

If Sam gets shot by a sniper, then Sam has to use a first aid kit. Eight of these are supplied at the beginning of the game and once they're gone then Sam will have to go to the hospital and the case will be over. He never actually gets fataly wounded enough to die, even when he goes flying off the top of a building on the end of a Mafiosa boot!

Buildings can be visited and actually walked around inside by Sam. The action inside the building is viewed through the windows blinds can be pulled down and lights switched on and off. If Sam is near a phone then the phone icon lights up on the table at the bottom of the main screen and he can make a call. He only has one phone number at the beginning of the game and phoning his office might provide him with some useful clues. Extra phone numbers can be collected by following up clues along the way.

If Sam gets framed during the game then the police will come along and arrest him. Like all good private detectives Sam carries a large array of disguises with him and if the police are hot on his trail then he can change into one of these at the press of a button. If the police get wise to one of the these disguises then the disguise icon will light up at the bottom of the screen at which point he's better think of something else to do. If he does get arrested the the police are usually satisfied with his claims of innocence and release him on bail.

Points are scored for the amount of time Sam manages to stay on the case. As his money icon goes down so his experience points go up. Useful clues and messages are scrolled along the table at the bottom of the screen and these will help sam along the way if he gets stuck.

### CRITICISM

**"Just when I thought *The Great Escape* was about as far as the arcade adventure could go, this comes along. More plot, better graphics, more atmosphere, more humour, in just about every department this game takes the biscuit as far as I'm concerned. The Chandleresque flavour is just about perfect, best played in a trilby with a packet of lucky strike and a glass of bourbon by your side, this is the next best thing to being Bogart. There are a heck of a lot of keys, and a keyboard overlay or an icon system might have been a big help. What I want to know is how MICROSPHERE can follow this."**

### CRITICISM

**"About once a year MICROSPERE bring out a game, but when they do appear, they are something to look forward to. *Contact Sam Cruise* is graphically in the *Skool Daze* style, but the atmosphere is very eerie and gangster-like. As soon as Sam Cruise's first messages appeared on the screen, I was sure that something good was coming up. The graphics are superb and the most realistic 3D effects in any of the Microsphere games — there is also lots of colour, well laid out and not too hard on the eyes. All aspiring detectives will love *Sam Cruise*, and I'm sure it will be a hit."**

### CRITICISM

**"This game is fun to play: there's so much to it! The gameplay is very good. Contrast is excellent, keeping you occupied is an understatement. Graphics are admirable; lots of colour has been used well, and the *Skool Daze* type characters are neat. Loads of things like the lights and the disguises have been put together with brilliant attention to detail. I think MICROSPERE really have got something here"**

**Producer: Microsphere**
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Dave Reidy**

### COMMENTS

**Control keys:** Q up, A down, O left, P right b pull/draw blind, D change disguise, F fuse, G pick up object, I information, K knock/use key at door, L switch on/off light, R forward roll, S aerial somersault, T use telephone, H hang up phone
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** responsive: unusual to begin with, but easy to get the hang of
**Use of colour:** easy on the eye
**Graphics:** lovely detail
**Sound:** spot effects
**Skill levels:** one
**Screens:** twenty or so in a large scrolling playing area
**General rating:** a highly original atmospheric game

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | 91% |
| **Graphics** | 92% |
| **Playability** | 88% |
| **Getting started** | 90% |
| **Addictive qualities** | 93% |
| **Value for money** | 93% |
| **Overall** | **93%** |

# ROGUE TROOPER

**Producer: Piranha**
Retail Price: **£9.99**
Author: **Design Design**

Readers of 2000 AD will recognise the main character in PIRANHA's latest game. Rogue Trooper is the soul survivor of the Quartz massacre. The rest of his regiment was systematically wiped out after being betrayed to the Norts and then left to the mercies of the Sun Legion.

The vid-tapes storing the vital evidence which Rogue Trooper craves will probably have survived the blast due to their protective casing. Eight of these vid-tapes must be collected and put safely in a waiting shuttle for transportation to the spaceport where the atrocity of the massacre can be revealed.

Three of Rogue's friends who died in the Quartz massacre were stored at the moment of their death on micro-chips. These chips are now attached to Rogue's helmet, back-pack and gun, and each of them, Helm, Gunnar and Bagman have different personalities. These GI buddies cajole and advise Rogue as he roams the hideously contaminated Nu Earth.

The Nu Earth has been completely ravaged by the effects of chemical warfare, although because he is a genetic creation, this only affects Rogue slowly. The Norts who are guarding this desolate wasteland have to wear special breathing masks in order to survive, and can be recognised because of this. As Rogue stomps around the Nu Earth he can either avoid the Norts or blast them with his own weapon. Extra ammo can be collected along the way if supplies get low.

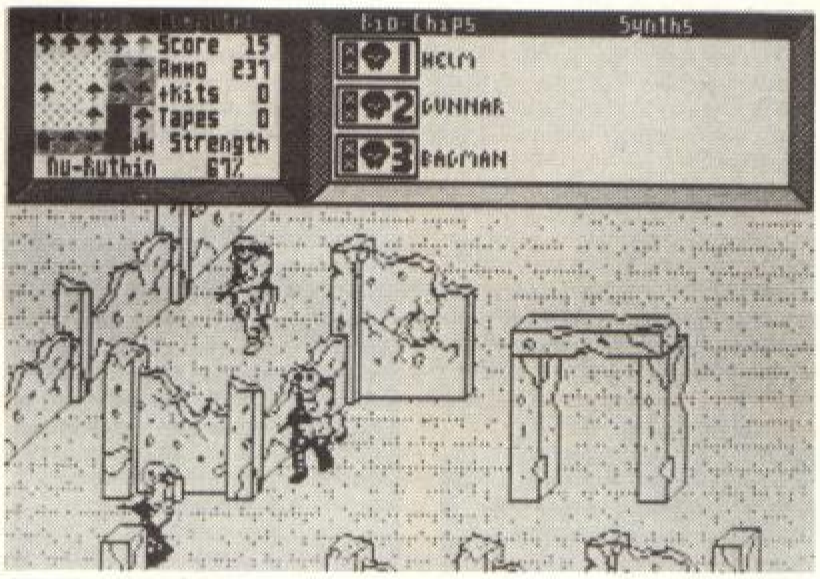
The marauding Norts are not the only perils facing Rogue on this ragged planet. Beware the minefields and the automated pillboxes which shoot anything (even Norts if they get in the way), and take quite a bit of blasting to destroy.

Each time Rogue is shot he loses five strength points, and stepping on a mine will severely dent his reserves. This damage is shown by the amount of strength he has left. When this strength level reaches zero he will die and the game will be over. First-aid packages crop up now and again and will replenish some of Rogue's energy.

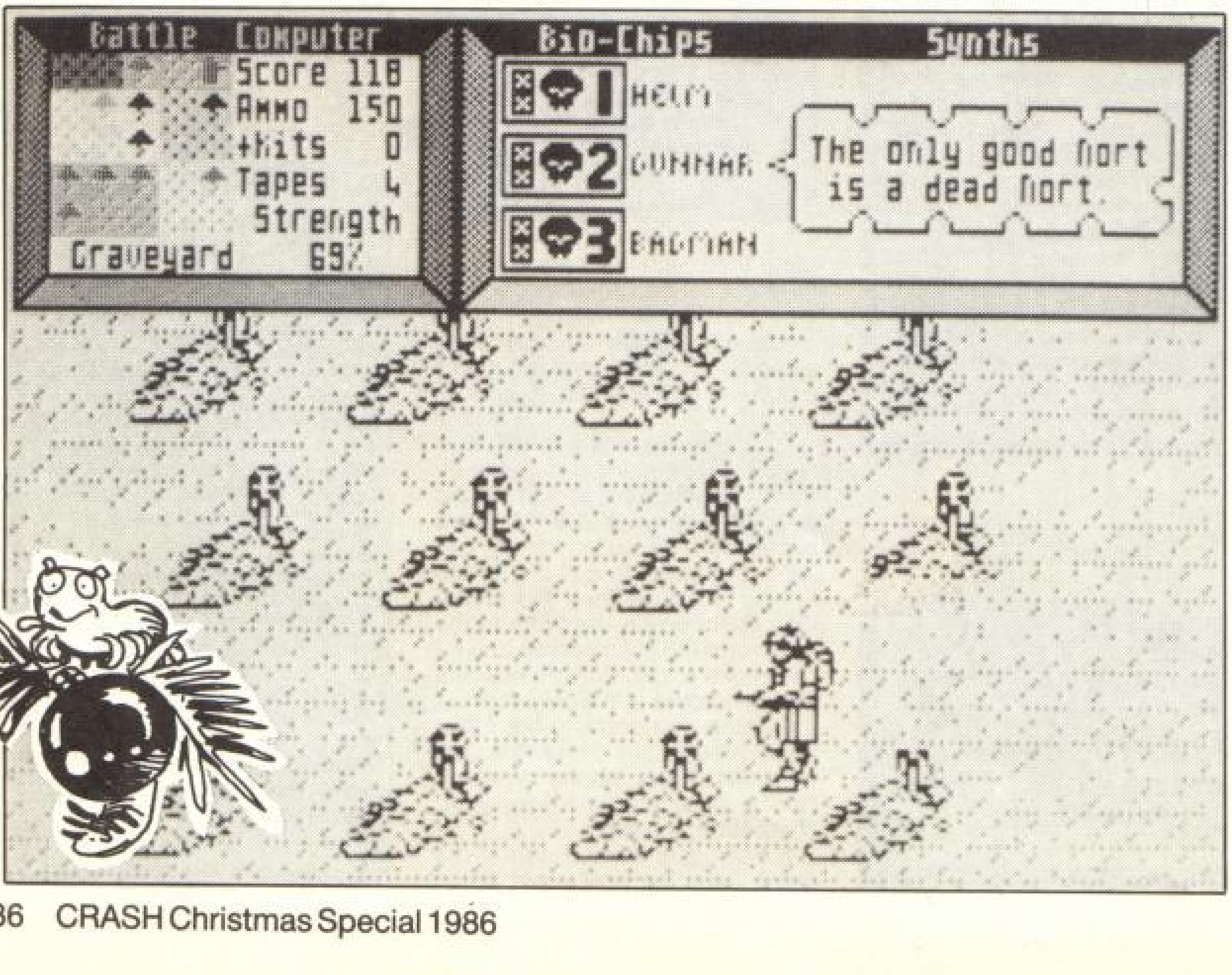
Rogue's status is shown on a chart at the top of the main screen. This shows how much ammo and first-aid kits he is currently holding and how many of the tapes he has found. Points are scored for any Norts killed and Rogue's strength is indicated as a percentage at the bottom of the chart. To the left is a small map. It shows up areas containing Norts, the location of the shuttle, and the type of ground around. This is important, as while Rogue is in some terrain, he is slowly healed, whilst the rad desert and other areas will slowly drain his strength. To the right are the three chips and a small screen on which their messages and general running commentary are displayed.

The essential vid-tapes are easily recognised and these, like everything else in the game are automatically picked up when Rogue walks into them.

**The ruined city is pretty packed with norts, so old Rogue had better watch his step**




**Rogue in the nort graveyard. But he's out of med kits, so he'd better be careful**




## CRITICISM

● **"I found that after only a few goes I was only one tape away from finishing the game. The game is quite addictive at first, but this soon wears off as you realize that it really is a very small play area, as the screen rolls around. All the different types of area contain some well drawn graphics but are all stick drawings, and lack any substance — I also found these areas a bit bare as far as baddies go. I would recommend this to someone who finds games hard to play — but for hardened players *Rogue Trooper* is much too boring."**

● *"The game perhaps isn't as good or as compelling as it could have been. Stomping around a fairly small wraparound playing area searching for things and murdering the odd baddie is a plot that's been used all too often in the games world. There is an overall lack of polish to the game. Graphically and sonically there is nothing in Rogue* that will raise any eyebrows but they are adequate. I think this will appeal mainly to 2000AD fans as the game itself is fairly run-of-the-mill."

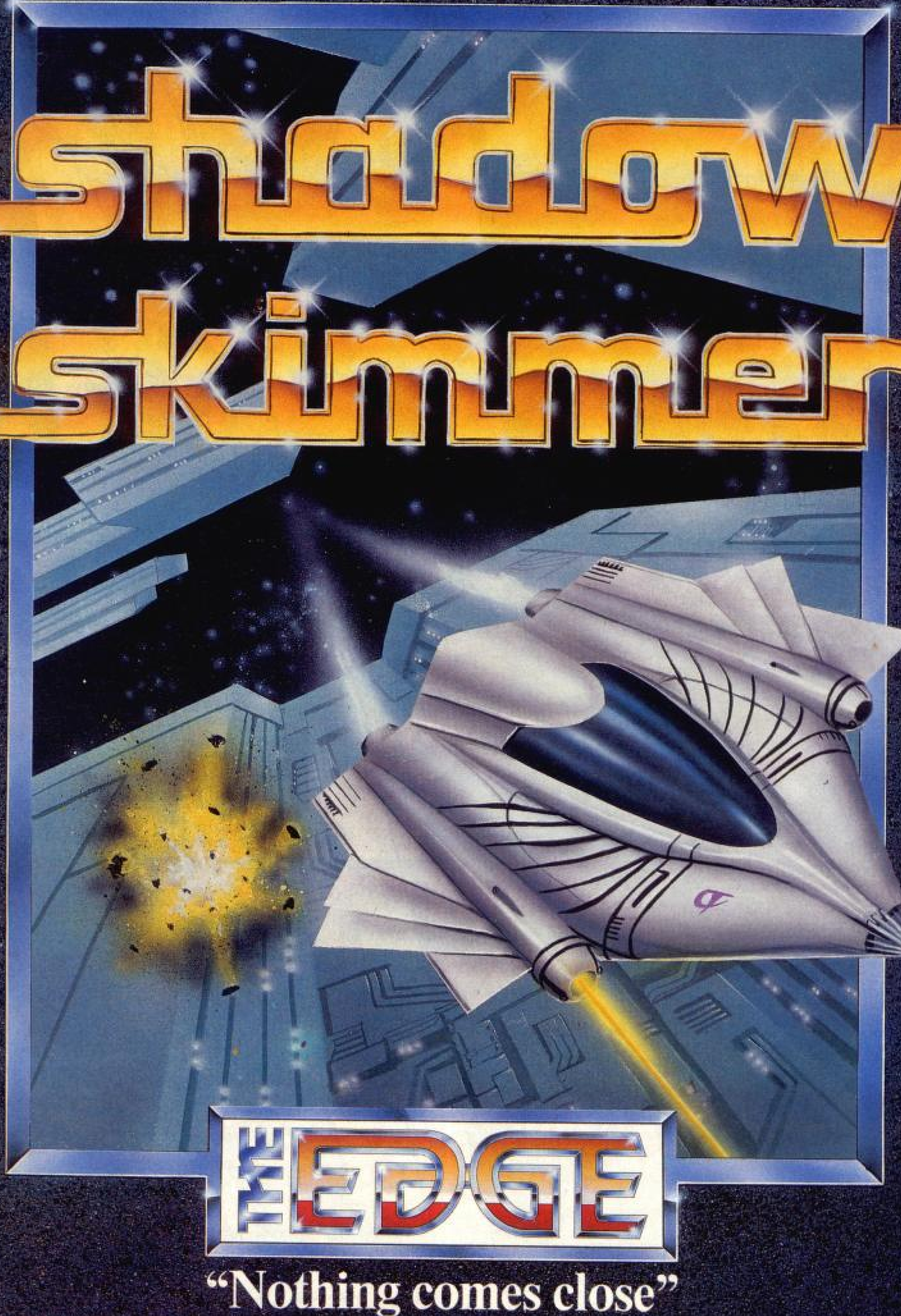
● "*Rogue Trooper* is an excellent game. The perspective is very good, and though the variation of colour starts to hurt the eyes after a while, I could play this game for hours. I only have a small gripe, and thats that its a little too easy to complete, and the finishing reward screen is fairly boring. The comments by the biochips add atmosphere to it, and the game is fun even if you forget the tapes, and go around blasting Norts and pill boxes."

## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** definable
**Joystick:** Kempston, Protek, Sinclair Interface II
**Keyboard play:** responsive
**Use of colour:** monochrome
**Graphics:** isometric 3D graphics
**Sound:** spot effects
**Skill levels:** one
**Screens:** 72
**General rating:** Good game, but a bit easy

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | 75% |
| **Graphics** | 82% |
| **Playability** | 76% |
| **Getting started** | 83% |
| **Addictive qualities** | 79% |
| **Value for money** | 71% |
| **Overall** | **79%** |

# A DEADLY ADVERSARY ...YOUR OWN MOTHERSHIP!

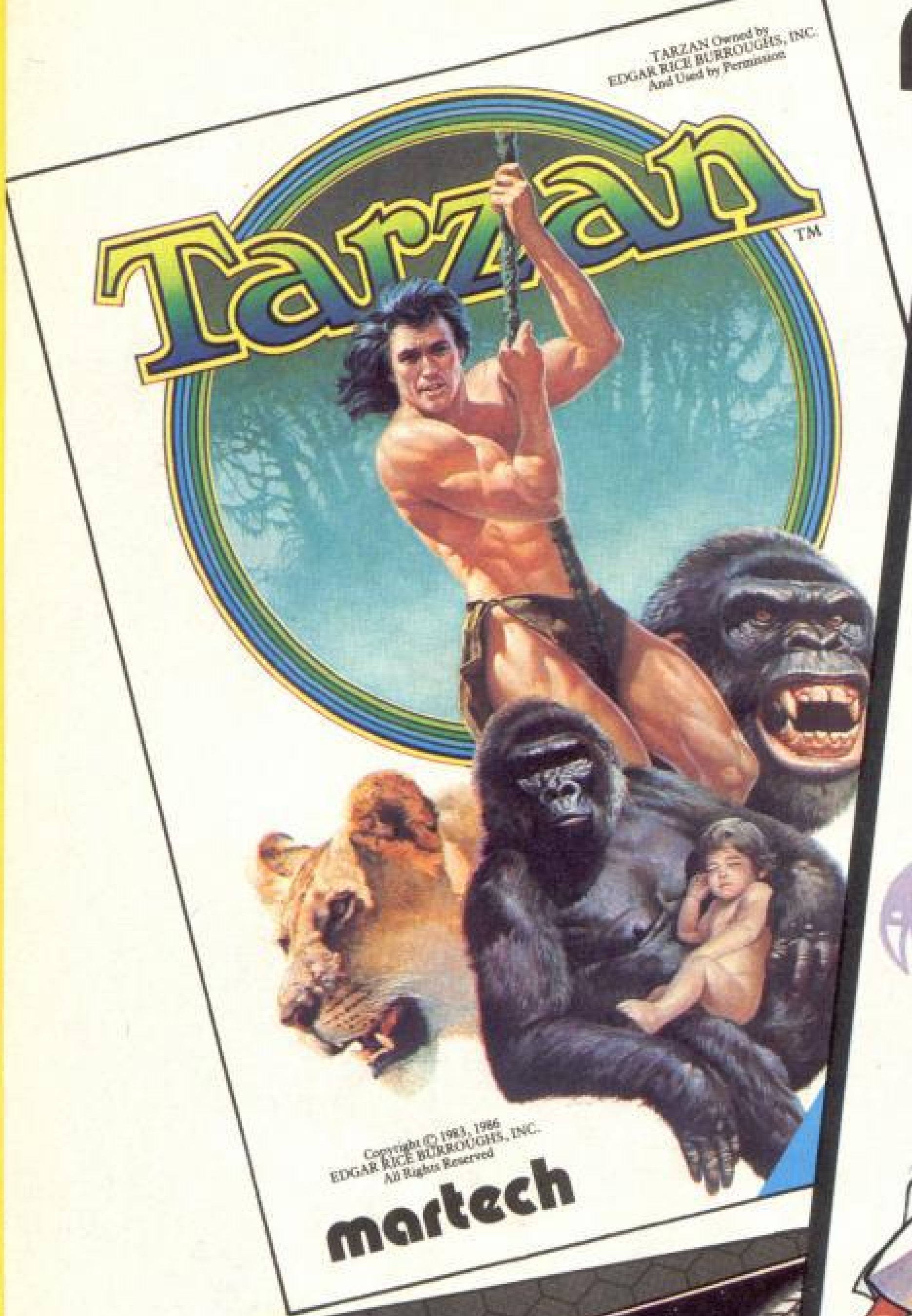



## "Nothing comes close"

A dazzling, supersmooth, super fast space combat game featuring unbelievable full colour screens and pulse racing action like you've never experienced before!

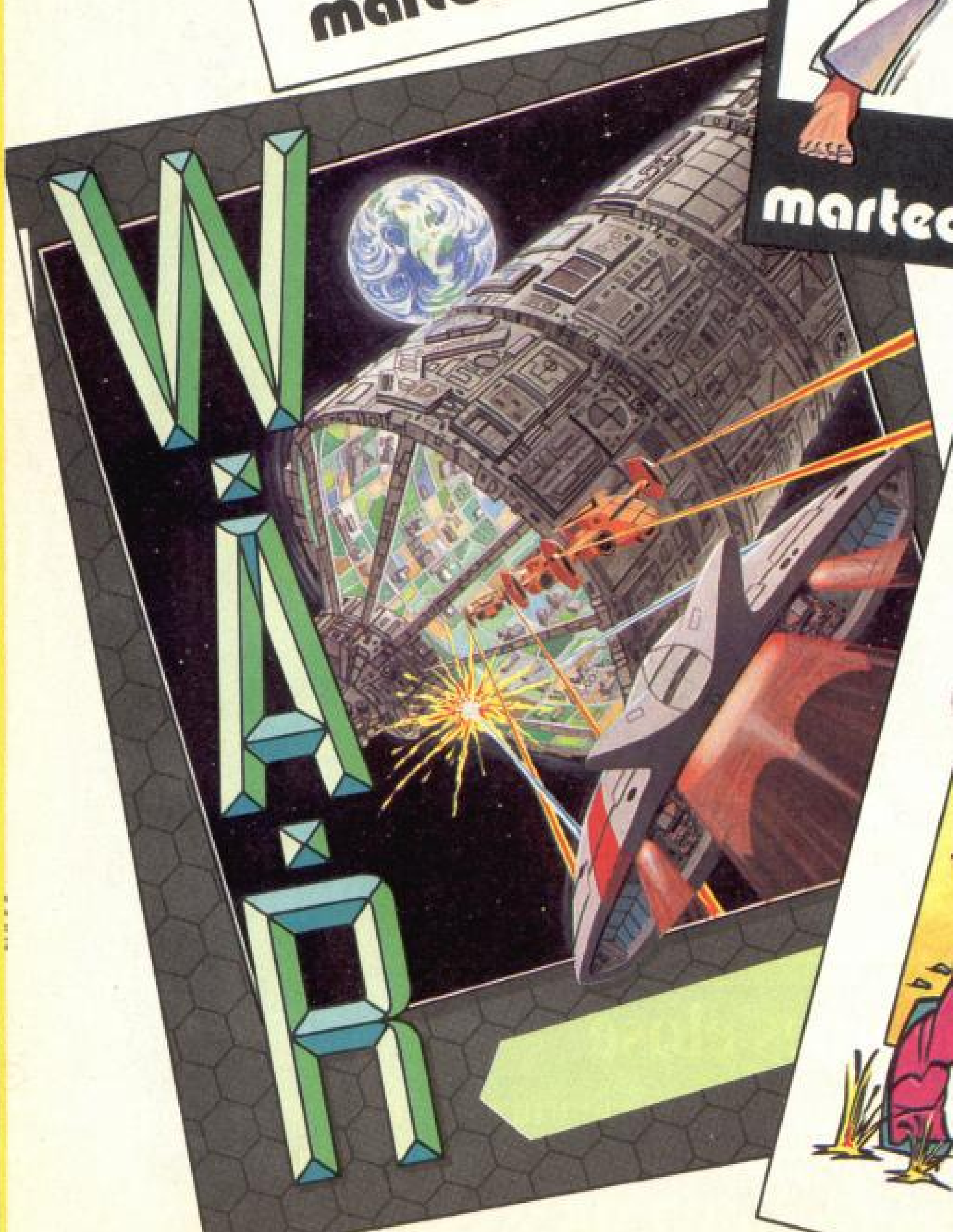
**48/128 Spectrum £7.95**

# martech....
## *LIVE THE GAME!*












# LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM



**The Christmas FORUM and not a single Christmas card! What a disappointment — but it's still the middle of November, so there's plenty of time left for people to send in cards for me to hang up above the fireplace in my cottage.**

**The big rush to get the Christmas Special ready in time is in progress at the moment, so without further ado, on with the letters . . . this month I couldn't find a missive that really deserved the £20 prize — let's hope the quality of letters improves in 1987!**

## COMMERCIAL BREAK

Dear Lloyd,
We own a Computer fanzine called THE SPECTRUM BUG. These people work in it: John David (me); Simon Calvert; Russel Goulbourne; 'The Packer', who packs in our mail-order department and many more.

It contains news, letters, hints, Reviews, programs, and loads more and is available from: ORDERS, Buggalot Towers, 18 Dailton Road, Up Holland, WN8 0HR. It costs 50 pence a month or £7.00 a year.

It's best to buy it for a year because if you buy it every month you might not get a copy . . . Cheques and postal orders made payable to The Spectrum Bug, please.

**John David, Buggalot Towers, Up Holland, West Lancs.**

*I understand Hannah has plans to take another look at fanzines early next year, so budding publishers should make sure she has the latest issues of their magazines.*

*Still no news on the YOUR SINCLAIR fanzine competition — even though our beloved Editor entered at the PCW Show having spotted a copy of CRASH in the collection of fanzines they used to illustrate the competition page. . . .*

**LM**

## ROLE PLAY REQUEST

Dear CRASH,
After reading your magazine(s) since you started way back then, I felt that I should pen (type??) a letter.

I have noticed recently a trend towards role-playing, Play By Mail and so on. I am in some respects glad about this. Really, role-playing has lost its last reasonable forum. Most magazines are either very poor quality or house-based, making a bias towards the publisher's products. So why don't you publish properly a RPG/PBM magazine? I'm sure it will be nicely subscribed to — there is a need for it. So dear nice ol' NEWSFIELD how about it??

The PBM column is, I admit, interesting but it seems to make out that the professional money-making games are the only ones worth bothering about. How about the amateur ones, especially those run by fanzines. These are on the whole free, only costing a stamp. They are by no means 'unprofessional' but very interesting and enjoyable. Ones I play in are *Toon II* by TOME OF HORRORS; *The Land* under SEWARS and I am about to join *Karush* in TELEGRAPH ROAD.

So why not give the amateur games an outlet? How about making a games directory, listing all PBM games, costs and who to contact in a similar fashion to the software directory in the first few issues of CRASH, which listed all the games written before the magazine was published, remember the one?

**Stephen Oliver, Hull**

*Just at the moment, everyone is concentrating on* **LM** *— and you should have spotted the results of all that effort by now! The New Year could bring some surprises on the PBM front, but The Powers That Be rarely tell me anything . . . except that I can't have a pay rise!*

*As for amateur PBM games — if you run one, drop Brendon Kavenagh a line and tell him all about it. He's already covered some 'amateur' football games in his column.*

**LM**

## ABYSMAL!

Dear Lloyd,
I am writing to tell you how abysmal your reviewers are, and not so amazingly brilliant as Paul Bell seems to think in his rather creepy letter in October (hoping to win his £20 of software). But I bet there are people like me who every month read your mag, see a CRASH Smash, think 'oh great!', buy it, play it and think what an abysmal game and think of the £10.00 that has just been wasted. A few games that spring to mind are: *Starstrike 2, Zoids, Jack the Nipper, Pentagram, Gunfright, Nightshade, Batman, Winter Games* and *Sweevos World*.

Don't try getting out of it by saying I'm a miserable sod who doesn't like anything, because there are smashes which are very good: *Dynamite Dan 2, Robin of the Wood, Quazatron, Elite, Bombjack, Commando, Shadowfire* and more.

But you cannot get away from the fact that your reviews are abysmal, and I think take too much notice of the Producer eg ULTIMATE for *Pentagram*, OCEAN for *Batman*, GARGOYLE for *Sweevo's World*. Now can you imagine ULTIMATE getting anything but a CRASH Smash? Wouldn't that be a surprise? But I bet it won't happen no matter how abysmal the games are that they write.

While I think about abysmal games, *Superbowl* springs to mind. (85% indeed, I've never played such a ridiculous game). If any software houses are listening, please write an American Football game, in the same sort of way as *Matchday* and *World Series Basketball*. As American Football is becoming ever more popular in England I'm sure that a game like this would go down very well. The only company I could see doing this would be OCEAN/IMAGINE.

I somehow don't think you'll publish this, but show this letter to your reviewers and see what they think.

**Nick Clemons, Wolston, Warwickshire.**

**PS** I do think that your reviews are very good, long and detailed — they're just ALWAYS WRONG.

*ALWAYS WRONG indeed! What about the reviews for* Dynamite Dan 2, Robin of the the Wood, Quazatron, Elite, Bombjack, Commando, Shadowfire *'and many more'.*

*Then you go on to say that the reviews are very good . . . some internal inconsistency in your argument here, I think. No doubt other readers will wish to have their say in due course.*

**LM**

## DOING THE SUMS

Dear Crash!,
Do I have a story to tell or do I have a story to tell? Sitting comfortably are we, then I shall begin.

It all started a week before Issue 34 of CRASH was due to be in the shops. I usually receive my CRASH a week before the shops (I don't know if other folk do also), so as you can imagine I was eagerly awaiting the rattle of the letter box. Well I waited and waited but it didn't come. I thought this very strange, as CRASH have been very good in delivering to my door. Anyway, as I was thinking over the situation in the living-room, I happened to glance at the local newspaper and Gasp! Shock! Horror! on the front page in bold writing it said 'Postal Strike Hits Dundee'. Pulling my hair out in desperation I took it for granted that this was the



reason why my CRASH hadn't been delivered. So I waited patiently 'til the strike was over thinking I would receive my CRASH any day, but, after a few days I still hadn't received it and decided to investigate.

More problems hit me as I couldn't find the piece of paper with my Mystical Number and when my Subscription ran out. Luckily I remembered I had written my number on an offer in the magazine months ago but hadn't sent it, so digging through past copies, I found my number and remembering the Mystical formula for finding out if your subscription is running out, I added 11 to my number which started CP22, and found to my dismay that it had indeed ran out and CRASH wouldn't be coming through my door till I sent another cheque through the post. So here is a warning to all other CRASH subscribers. Don't let this happen to you and always check your number.

**Luv and kisses, G Brown, Downfield, Dundee**

*A cautionary tale indeed, Mr Brown.*

**LM**

## THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE

Dear Sir,

I am writing in defence of the Spectrum 128, and also to tell P A Rosbotham of Garswood to read manuals and books before making crap statements about computers of which he knows nothing about.

1. If Spectrums (48K) are so outdated, why do software companies still write brilliant games for them? I admit that the sound on the Spectrum 48K is not up to scratch but the graphics are improving all the time. Take *Lightforce* — somehow there are no attribute problems, and it looks as good as anything on the Commode (whoops!) Commodore.

2. With regards to the 128's sound, I admit that the first few games lacked imagination, but after buying *Glider Rider* I forgot about those. If you talk to the sound chip using OUT commands you can control the three channels in 128 sound and also control BEEP at the same time, meaning you could have 4 to 5 channel sound — better sound than the C64. The 128 sound chip can play while pictures and text are running on the screen.

3. I would also like to point out that both the 48 and 128 Spectrums are more 'user' friendly than any of the Commodores could dream of being. This is because of the old fashioned BASIC that Commodore have included in their machines.

4. A last word for P A Rosbotham. Before dragging Sinclair's name through the mud, think about how many Commodore computers have been unsuccessful or crap!. On the crap side there's the VIC 20. On the unsuccessful side there's the Commodore 128. Mr Rosbotham should learn to read and listen before he writes next time.

**Matthew Martin, Cwmbran, Gwent**

*A strong rebuttal of Mr Rosbotham's views indeed, Matthew. Another letter from the pen of Mr R appears in the FORUM this month — he anticipated the outcry his last missive would generate . . .*

**LM**

## 'PROPER REVIEWS' REQUESTED

Dear Lloyd,

I have brought CRASH since Issue No 1 and never had any complaints before, but Lloyd what's happening? *Glider Rider* by QUICKSILVA received a review rating of 92% for the 128K version and wasn't CRASH Smashed. To quote CRASH "If only software houses would write games for the 128 it might become as popular as the 48."

Well come on CRASH, If only you gave 128 games proper reviews, then the 128 might become accepted by games freaks.

Also, at the top of reviews could we have an indication as to machine compatability as per the old days eg. 48k — 48/128K - 128K, as I have purchased several games reviewed by CRASH which will not load on the 128.

**128s rule, A R Woodley, Basildon, Essex.**

*We decided that putting a* CRASH Smash *logo on the* Glider Rider *review might have lead to confusion as it was only the 128K version that was worthy of the accolade. This month, you will notice,* Starglider *from* RAINBIRD *is a Smash for both versions of the Spectrum and we have made this as obvious as possible.*

*As for supporting and reviewing 128K games, cast your mind back to our review of* Knight Tyme *— the 'first 128K Smash'. The whole question of machine compatibility is complicated by the fact that there have been several issues of the 128K machine already and it is difficult to be definitive. All new games should be compatible with most 128s and the 48 Spectrums — it's the older games where the problems seem to lie.*

**LM**

## FOOTBALL DEBATE

Dear Sir,

As a subscriber for two years running, and a loyal fan of CRASH magazine, I decided to send you this letter to complain about a certain review in Issue 33 regarding ADDICTIVE's *Head Coach*. I purchased this game some time ago at the PCW show, and was astounded by its qualities in keeping the user totally involved at all times by calling the plays and deciding match tactics, as well as by trading deals between matches. What amazed me the most was the up-dating each season of the statistics, including the player's ages, season record, overall record, super-bowl victories and so on.

On reflection, your adverse comments coupled with pathetic ratings in the various categories baffled me completely. If you cast your mind back to the *Football Manager* game, one can find many annoying elements — each season, players' skills/energy get changed and also the graphics are no better than your flimsy review of *Rugby Manager*. Yet *Head Coach* at least gives the user a fair representation of the game, if indeed it is only stick men graphics.

While on the subject of comparisons, the league fixtures in *Football Manager* leave a lot to be desired as a team is only played once and not home and away. And as for the other teams scores, they sometimes resemble a rugby league match. Meanwhile at least *Head Coach* attempts to make some effort by printing out decent scores, and by randomising league fixtures so that there is a constant variety of opponents, depending on league success.

Anyway putting these various points aside, my main bone of contention is that if you can give *Football Manager* a 100% review or thereabouts, then *Head Coach* should follow close behind. Before I sign off, my personal opinion is that *Head Coach* may lack some of the rules of American Football (such as 4 downs to make 10 yards), but I'll reckon 80% of the fans of American Football would love this game. I suggest you pick another wally who at least likes American Football and give the game what it deserves....A DECENT REVIEW!!!!!!!!!

**J T F Hooley, Twickenham, Middlesex**

*The best thing I can do in the circumstances, is to hand over temporarily to Dominic Handy — our in-house American Football afficianado and the driving force behind the review in question . . .*

*I'm sorry that you didn't like the review of Head Coach John — I can assure you that all the reviewers like American Football and I, at least, am sure of the rules and know plenty about the game. When comparing the Football Manager to Head Coach, you must realise that there was a completely different review team then, with a different editor — and the magazine was relatively new. You must also take into account that programming techniques and knowledge have improved since 1984. The review of Head Coach was written as an assessment of a simulation game. To be a good simulation game, the program must be written accurately with proper attention to the rules and regulations of the sport involved — and it has to be said that Head Coach is very inaccurate as far as rules go — you say that it lacks the rule allowing 4 downs for 10 yards. This is the backbone of the whole game: the whole point of it is to progress down the pitch in the right number of downs. You also say that the graphics are as good as, if not better than Football Manager, yet the ratings are worse — surely if all reviews were compared to old games then most new games would be Smashes? I think is it much better to compare with present day standards. As to 80% of American Football fans liking it, I must disagree, as any knowledgable fan would be annoyed with the amateurish way in which it was written. You only have to look at* ARGUS PRESS SOFTWARE's *American Football to see how good the game could have been. Lastly, I must stress again that the criticism that appeared in our review was a personal opinion from American Football fans.*

Thank you Dominic.

**LM**

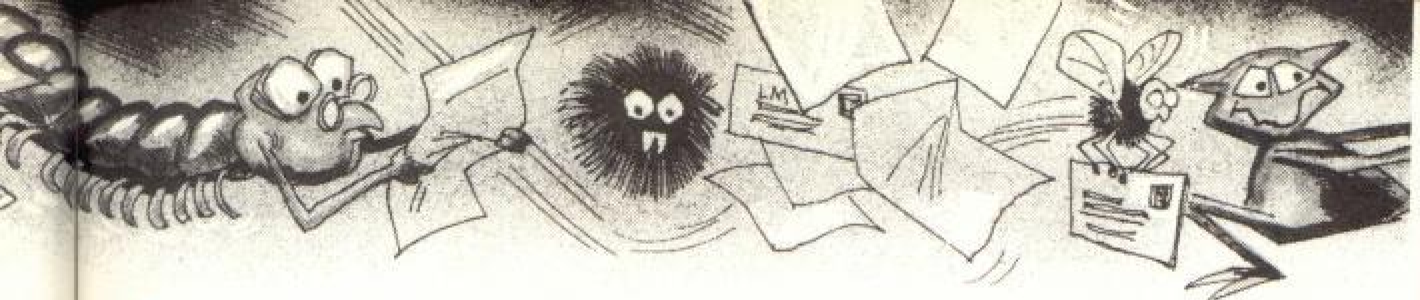
## PENPAL CORNER

*This month's postbag included a few appeals for Spectrum-owning pen pals. If you'd like to start writing letters to a fellow reader, here are a few people who'd like to hear from you . . .*

**Roger Brown**
43 Victoria Road
Rayleigh
Essex
SS6 8EG

**Steffan Randall**
27 Mansfeldt Road
Newbold
Chesterfield
Derbyshire
S41 7BW

**Craig Hough**
1 Coniston Way
Croston
Preston
Lancs
PR5 7SD









## HARD TO FIND

Since the beginning of 1985 I have been unsuccessfully trying to find the micro-PROLOG program for the 48K Spectrum.

Having tried Sinclair Research, a Swedish distributor and a number of software shops in London. I now turn to CRASH as a last resort.

I would like to know if anyone can give me a suggestion as to where I might find it.

**Borje Nilsson, Bakverksv. 4, S-724 76 Vasteras, Sweden**

*Anyone out there able to help Borje?*

**LM**

## REPAIRSHOP BLUES

Dear Lloyd,

Warning: All spectrum owners with joysticks, printers or anything else which uses your expansion port please read on . . .

I have sent my Spectrum to **MANCOMP LTD**, three times (unreliable Spectrum). The first and second times they did a good job of it and I was pleased, so when I had another problem I sent it to them again. This time when it came back, horror of horrors, I found a piece of printer paper saying that I couldn't use my joystick, printer or anything else for three months (that's why this letter is typewritten and not thermally printed). What can I do for three months without my peripherals? (answers on a postcard please . . .).

**Trevor Wright, Ewyas Harold,**

*It seems a few repair firms are putting stickers over the expansion port when they've fixed a Spectrum. An awful lot of faults are caused by people connecting or disconnecting peripherals while the power is on, or wobbling the connection during a franctic session of alien-zapping. This tends to cause the tracks to short out, and can result in damage to the works of the computer.*

*I don't think* **MANCOMP** *actually mean you CAN'T use a printer — it's more likely that they mean they won't repair your computer under their three-month warranty if you do plug something into its expansion port. Whether this approach is entirely 'fair' is open to question. Any repair firms like to comment?*

**LM**

## DOWNSIDE UP

G'day Sport!,

I must say that I find your magazine interesting, full of hidden messages and cryptic information.

F'rinstance, from page 162 of your November issue it's obvious that **PALACE SOFTWARE**'s *Sacred Armour of Antiriad* was programmed down under in good ol' Oz.

Ah well, back to the old amber nectar.

Cheers, Bruce.

Martin Dunn, St Annes, Lancashire

*No. Just a slight Antipodean inclination (LMLWD) 'down' in ART!*

**LM**





BUG BOX
CRASH BANG WALLOP PRODUCTIONS IN CONJUNCTION WITH MANGRAM ENTERPRISES PRESENTS—
THE BUGS TAKE LUDLOW
part 2
DRAMATISED FOR TELEVISION BY A POTATO
RECAP:
If you bought CRASH regulary you wouldn't need a recap but anyway the bugs have captured the whole of Ludlow and now they intend to take over CRASH TOWERS! With it now? Well read on...
ARE YOU READING THIS BURTON?
THERE IT IS BUGS!
CRASH TOWERS!
ZZZZ
THE SOUND OF HARD WORK!
CRASH
(shed)
COR! WHAT A GUSTY DAY!
ERM-NIGHT!
GRRR! ROTTEN SPINDLES!
ZARRIT? IT'S ONLY LITTLE ISN'T IT?
THAT'S PERSPECTIVE YOU ID'YUT!
ARTIST'S VOICE!
HELLO MUM
FAT WORM THROWS A WOBBLER!
OKAY BUGS!!! CHARGE!!!
WAIT A MINUTE!
WELL THANKS A BUNDLE FELLAS! NEXT TIME I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU'D CHARGE WITH ME!
AND AFTER HOURS OF ORGANISATION...
SOMEONE SHOULD TEACH YOU SOME MANNERS!
HEADS UP HEROES!!! THE BUGS ARE TAKING OVER CRASH TOWERS!!!
WHO IS NELSON SANDWICH ANYWAY?
ERM... I'D WRESTLE THEM BUT I'VE JUST HAD MY HAIR DONE!
WATER MATTHAU
AGAIN?
HS
I'M PHONING THE ARMY!
THEY'LL SAVE US!
WE FEEL WE MUST APOLOGIZE FOR AN INCORRECT STATEMENT IN OUR LAST CARTOON IN WHICH WE SAID JUDITH WAS JUST CUTE. IN ACTUAL FACT JUDITH IS THE GLOW OF THE MOON, THE PETALS OF A ROSE AND IS AS SWEET AS A BARLEY SUGAR.
THOMP. 86 (SO NO COPYING!)
I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE ...ER... SOMETHING BEGINNING WITH "T"!
TREE? TRIFFID? TOE?
FISH TANK!
COR! WHAT A GUSTY DAY!
WHERE THE HELL IS LUDLOW!?!
L
G.B.
MAP
MORE IMPORTANT-
WHERE'S THE NEAREST PUB!
THIS AIN'T THE SACRED ARMOUR OF ANTIRIAD!!!
NOW THEN-- THE CRASH TEAM ARE GONNA' BE PULVERISED BY MY LITTLE FRIEND HERE!
GRRRRRRR!
AHHH! NO! HE'S GOING TO SWEEP THE FLOOR WITH US!!!
TYPICAL! THEY'RE JUST ABOUT TO BE SPLATTERED AND THIS EPISODE FINISHES!
HOW'S THAT FOR A CLIFF HANGER?
WILL THE CRASH TEAM ESCAPE BEING CRUSHED BY THE ROBOT?
(YES THEY DO BUT JUST WAIT AND SEE HOW! YOU'LL LOVE IT!)
WILL THE ARMY EVER FIND LUDLOW?
WILL I GET ANYTHING FOR THIS CARTOON?
WILL YOU BUY CRASH AND FIND OUT?
TO BE CONCLUDED


BIG TROUBLE
IN
LITTLE
CHINA
© Twentieth Century Fox




## CHARTWATCHING

Dear Lloyd,
Having read all the complaints about 3D games, ULTIMATE, and the complaints about reviewers and how they review, I decided to compile the overall CRASH Hotline Top 30 chart for all 33 issues, and it turned out like this.

1. *Elite* **92%**
2 *Bombjack* **92%**
3 *Commando* **94%**
4 *Batman* **92%**
5 *Jack the Nipper* **93%**
6 *Lunar Jetman* **95%**
7 *Green Beret* **88%**
8 *Everyone's a Wally* **93%**
9 *Jet Set Willy* **93%**
10 *Atic Atac* **92%**
11 *Match Day* **86%**
12 *Ghosts n Goblins* **95%**
13 *Codename Mat* **93%**
14 *Exploding Fist* **92%**
15 *Quazatron* **94%**
16 *Knight Lore* **94%**
17 *Shadowfire* **96%**
18 *Spy Hunter* **89%**
19 *Alien 8* **95%**
20 *Frank Bruno's Boxing* **86%**
21 *Sabrewulf* **91%**
22 *Fairlight* **93%**
23 *Manic Miner*
24 *Underwurlde* **92%**
25 *Starstrike* **93%**
26 *Zoom*
27 *Chequered Flag*
28 *Hypersports* **92%**
29 *Starquake* **96%**
30 *Jet Pac*

Out of the first 17, only 2 didn't get a CRASH Smash, and out of 30, only 7 didn't receive his great accolade. Four of the seven were so close that people shouldn't be complaining about having the reviewers names (initials) next to their comments, because the 'jury' of three usually get it right. The other three games I do not think were reviewed, but if they were I am certain that they would have got exceedingly high marks, because they were all very good games at the time they were brought out.

Then there are all the people who complain about ULTIMATE. If you look at the Top 30, ULTIMATE have 7 out of the Top 30 games. Who says they don't produce brilliant games? The people who read CRASH voted for this chart so you can't complain.

The three games which have had most of the arguments against them are all in the Top 30, so isn't surprising that ULTIMATE, and other companies like them, are using this format.

So stop complaining because you can't do anything about it, and for a change can't we have some constructive comments?
**John Hewitt, York**

*An interesting statistical analysis, John. I am forced to agree with all your sentiments. The next correspondent, however, puts forward a different viewpoint . . .*
**LM**

# BAD OLD DAYS

Dear Lloyd,
I agree with Robert Hayden's letter in last month's CRASH. I paid out a fiver for games like *Maziacs* and *Escape* which are pure garbage. The only quality the games had was the artwork on the inlay cards. I don't know why people grumble about games costing £10.00 — take a look at some of the new budget games available. I have recently purchased *Molecule Man* from MASTERTRONIC and *Pro Golf* from ATLANTIS which are two of the most accurate and enjoyable games I have ever played. At only £1.99 they are both great value for money.

Lastly, you'd better get your comp's minion seen to by a doctor. The *Shaolin's Road* spot the difference competition only seemed to have one difference!! (probably a printing error) which was a tiny dot on the man on the right hand side's head!
**Ronald Henderson, Hamilton, Lanarkshire**

*Generally you get what you pay for. Sometimes you get more than you pay for — in the case of* Knight Tyme *perhaps — and other times you get less —* Great Space Race *et al.*

*The lack of differences wasn't really the downtrodden Minion's fault — someone 'Up in ART' was doing his very best to present the drawing in the most gorgeous way and slipped up, putting the same picture in twice. Words have been exchanged, and the competition re-run. Sorry for the eyestrain it caused . . .*
**LM**

# AGEIST COMPETITIONS POLICY!

Dear Lloyd,
I must write to you (which I already have) concerning competitions in CRASH — the problem is age groups. You see, although many readers of CRASH are pretty old, (17+) I am only 11. I have been reading CRASH since Issue 1, and have every issue so far. I love entering competitions, and I enter quite a lot of them, but now I am wondering whether should carry on, because every time I enter, I'm beaten by people who are about 10 years older than me (especially in drawing comps). I have no chance. Okay, I am quite good at drawing and answering competitions, but not as good as people who are twice as old. I have written before about age groups. That is what you need! (10-15, 15-20, 20+). Please consider this point, because there are other young kids out there!
**Nick Drewett, Bushey, Hertfordshire.**

*A reasonable point, Nick. I have a feeling that our Competition Minion would panic if we told him that from now on there would be three age groups for every competition — the extra administration involved in effectively running three competitions for every one would be enormous!*

*As it is, we do try to have a mix of competition types, including simpler wordsquares and spot the differences, where age isn't really a barrier to winning. Admittedly, the older you are the better you are likely to be at drawing and we do try to take into account ages of entrants when compiling the list of runners up. I seem to remember a six-year-old getting an 'honourable mention' in a* Frank Bruno Box-ing *competition many moons ago, for instance.*

*I'd be interested to hear other readers' comments on the subject of competitions.*
*LM*

## CRASH MEGA-BEINGS . . .

Dear Lloyd,
I am writing to you in confusion. I recently decided to purchase an NLQ printer, and with it a 'shiny' new wordprocessor, to replace my ageing *Tasword II*.

In the search for enlightenment as to which wordprocessor to buy, I delved through my CRASH back issues and came up with the August 1986 TECH NICHE.

I avidly pored over the pages, absorbing the wisdom there abounding, but to what end? I was still as uncertain as to the best purchase.

Now I am well aware that, as with most things, it is very much a case of each to his own. But surely having been locked in a broom cupboard for a few days with only bread, water and a Spectrum (man cannot live by bread alone), Mr Handy could have come up with something less ambiguous than:

At the end of the *Tasword III* review, "There is no doubt in my mind TASMAN have now definitely got the top spot as far as wordprocessors go".

And then going on to say at the end of *The Writer* review, "Any self-respecting Spectrum owner who wants a wordprocessor should definitely go out and get *The Writer*".

So which is it? buy both and use them on alternate days? We mere mortals look toward the omnipotent mega-beings at CRASH, keepers of the 'Eye-of-Oktup' for guidance. Surely, since Mr Handy (maybe not so handy after all!) had the opportunity to give these packages a good going over, he could have made a closing recommendation, and left the final decision to us.
**S Young, Headingly, Leeds.**

*I think the final decision is still probably up to you. Dominic was clearly very impressed with both packages, and as something of a wordprocessor collector, is the kind of fellow who would have purchased both. . . .*

*Dom tells me that both packages can drive a printer through the RS232 port on Interface 1 — and reckons that* Tasword III *would probably be the better bet for you, seeing as you already have* Tasword II. *Thus speaks a Mega-Being . . .*
**LM**



## DISK PLUG

Dear Lloyd,
Having just read Robert Blains' complaint in Issue 34 about there being no support for the OPUS *Discovery* disk system, can I put a plug in for a club a few OPUS users have started in our area? It's called the *Spectrum Discovery Club*, and we hope that we can get enough interest going to put pressure on software houses to produce disk software. We are also issuing a newsletter free of charge with members' hints, tips and letters — so come on you OPUS users let's get together and be a force to be reckoned with.

Anyone interested should send a self-addressed envelope to *Spectrum Discovery Club*, 8 Raynham Crescent, Keighley, West Yorkshire.
**Peter Lilley, Keighley, West Yorkshire**

*And the very best of luck with the club, Peter. You might like to consider putting out own Tech Tipster, Simon Goodwin, on your mailing list . . .*
**LM**




## BARBARIC CRUELTY

Dear Sir,
Why did you review the *Ole Toro* computer game from **AMERICANA**? And why did you not condemn the subject matter? I enclose a recent review of the game from one of your rivals, C&VG magazine, which should have been your attitude to this appalling game.

In your next issue, perhaps you should print a full page colour picture of a scene from this 'sport', or perhaps send out videos of a bullfight. CRASH readers will then be able to see what really happens here, with the BLOOD and the GORE and then make up their minds whether or not they should buy *Ole Toro*.

**R C Fortune, Isle of Sheppey, Kent**

*Hmm. Like Tim Metcalfe, editor of C&VG who wrote the review, you obviously hold strong views on cruelty to animals — and sign your letter 'Project Basilisk'. You do have a valid point about bull fighting, which I would never seek to defend, but I cannot agree with your suggestions. I don't much like being told what my attitude should be, either.*

*We reviewed* Ole Toro *because it is a computer game — a computer game which doesn't glorify the violence of bull fighting. Had it done so, we may have felt it appropriate to pass comment. You and Tim are both entitled to your opinions, but 'reviewing' a game and doing nothing but condemn its subject material doesn't seem very positive to me. 0/10 across the board because you disagree with the basic scenario of a game seems very negative . . .*

*To take your argument to its logical conclusion, we should print horrific pictures of human mutilation with every wargame reviewed in FRONTLINE — pictures of SS Torture with the review of* The Great Escape, and pictures of the results on human beings of aerial bombing with just about every flight simulator. And so on. The magazine would become a catalogue of horror and mutilation if we looked for a literal message behind every game scenario.

Sadly, many computer games feature violence, but the violence that takes place between pixels on the screen of a computer is, to my mind, much less harmful and much less 'de-sensitising' than the images brought into our homes by television and newspapers.

What do other readers feel about this subject?

**LM**

### EL TORO

- **Machine**: Spectrum
- **Supplier**: US Gold/Americana
- **Price**: £2.99

A sick "sport" becomes a sick "game" thanks to the Spanish Dinamic programming people. They've taken their national pastime of butchering bulls in public and turned it into the nastiest bit of "software" I've seen for some time.

Just like the real thing the idea of the game is to get your little matador to butcher the bull in the most "artistic" manner possible.

The people who created this game ought to have THEIR ears chopped off — and US Gold ought to be ashamed of themselves actually releasing it.

If you see this on the shelves of your local computer store get them to take it off and put it where it belongs. In the bin. It's a crude and barbaric game that should never have been released.

**Tim**

| | |
|---|---|
| Graphics | 0 |
| Sound | 0 |
| Value | less than 0 |
| Playability | 0 |

## SOFTWARE RIP-OFFS?

Dear Lloyd,
Please, please can you help us. We now think that we have been ripped off by a mail-order software firm. Over two months ago (October 12th), my friend Bridget Wolar and myself sent a total of £22.00 to **SOFTWARE WORLD (UK) LTD.** I sent £12.95 for the Spectrum 128 version of *Fairlight II*, which they stated in their catalogue as being available for sale now. My friend sent for *Knight Tyme* and the book *Spectrum Machine Language For The Absolute Beginner* which cost her £9.00 for the Spectrum 128. A month later Bridget received the incorrect version of *Knight Tyme* and she returned it to them immediately after receiving it. As the weeks passed we began to get worried, since we had received no word from the company. We sent several letters to the company, but they didn't reply. So recently I tried to phone them, but I failed to get through.

I've lost money before when a software firm **UNITSOFT** went bankrupt, but I have read nothing about this mail order company going out of business. Please Lloyd, you are our last hope of get-

## GIANT EGOS

Dear Lloyd,
Please, please, please print this letter for me or CRASH popularity ratings will go down by one! Thank you. The reason I want you to print it is because I seem to be left out a bit (Ahhhhhhh).

My cousin, namely Sean Doran, got his name mentioned twice in Issue 34 — for the 'Joe Bug' cartoon in the FORUM and he was able also a superhero for *Master of Magic*. All this seems to have gone to his head. So much so that he is having difficulty getting through the door (sorry for stealing your joke John). My pen pal, John Wilson is a regular Superhero and has given himself the nickname 'El Supremo'. All this is making me so mad, and so determined to get my name mentioned in the most popular computer mag in the world.

The main point of my letter is about the poor state of budget software. Why do so many budget software houses market such totally crap games? Most games are hardly even worth 50p never mind two or three pounds. One glowing example of crap software was *Bump Set Spike* in Issue 34. Not one of the ratings was above 45%. I think that speaks for itself! Yet, after budget software houses see their new release flop, they release another crap game and watch it flop too. Surely they would have the sense to produce better games than were doing rather than filling computer shop shelves with rubbish. I think that some budget software houses just about manage to scrape up enough money to keep their company going and my advice to them is, stop trying!

Not all budget software houses are like this of course. **MASTERTRONIC** and **FIREBIRD** are two of the best around at the moment. I remember when **MASTERTRONIC** wrote games like *Alcatraz Harry* and *Apollo 2*. Now they have come out with big hits with *Universal Hero* and *Lap of The Gods* as have **FIREBIRD** with *Olli and Lissa* and *Thrust*. Both of these houses deserve the highest praise, even if they do come off with the odd crap game or two!

Why do popular budget software houses not advertise their new releases?

**Thomas Johnston, Carrickfergus, Co.Antrim, Northern Ireland**

*No-one's perfect! Budget games have always been a mixed bag — but there seems to be a good market for poor games as well as good games on the budget front. Despite consistently poor reviews of late, one budget house we know of is doing 'very nicely thank you' in terms of volume of sales.*

*Obviously, there is less money to spend on product development when you are only charging a couple of pounds for the finished item, so it's bound to be a matter of 'win some, lose some'.*

*Read the reviews before buying to avoid disappointment. . . .*

**LM**



ting our money back. I have enclosed in this letter details about the company. Please could you try and contact them for me since I live in Ireland and find it difficult to get into contact with companies in Britain.

It would also be a good idea if CRASH magazine had a column in it which warned readers of 'Cowboy' mail-order firms and dodgy business practices. I hope to hear news of our money very soon.

**Thomas Connolly, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, Ireland.**

*Oh dear! It's bad news I have for you.* SOFTWARE WORLD *has gone into liquidation with debts of over £75,000, and if my experience of such matters holds true in this instance, you now have very little chance of getting all your money back. When a company goes 'bust', any money available to pay out to creditors goes to employees first, secured creditors second and then other creditors, including suppliers and customers, last. Often, only pennies in the pound are paid out to unsecured creditors — and then only if they are very lucky.*

*It might be worth your while dropping a line to the person who has been appointed liquidator of — to register your claim — Mr Ian Q Taylor of Smith Dove, 96-98 St James Road, Northampton, NN5 5IZ is dealing with the matter.*

*Fortunately, the days when 'cowboys' were common in the mail order software market are largely over, but one or two will always be around. It is very difficult for us to report on cowboy activities — often firms keen to rip people off come and go very rapidly. If you order software from an advertisement placed in a magazine and end up being ripped off, you can always write to the magazine that ran the advertisement in question and see what they can do about it.*

*Alternatively, there's the CRASH mail order service run by Auntie Aggie — or you could try buying products direct from companies that produce them if their adverts invite mail order customers.*

**LM**




## MISUNDERSTOOD!

Hello Lloyd!,

I get the feeling that a large number of readers will mis-understand my letter in Issue 34, and think that I'm just slagging the Spectrum off. This isn't true.

I think the best way to explain my viewpoint is to draw parallels with another of my hobbies, cars. I own a 1978 Princess. Now there's nothing wrong with my car — not everyone may like it, it may be getting old, but it still does the job which it was designed to do. Similarly, I own a Spectrum — some people despise them, it's getting old, but it still works.

However, were someone buying a new car today, I wouldn't expect them to buy a Princess, even if it were still available — I'd expect them to buy a car with a more modern style, and more economical performance.

Similarly, I wouldn't expect anyone to buy a new Spectrum. It could be argued that the Spectrum Plus 2 is a better machine, but my own view is that it's just the old Spectrum with bits bolted on. Putting a turbo and a few spoilers on my Princess wouldn't turn it into a modern car.

If the Spectrum Plus 2 had anything fundamentally new about it, it could be considered to be a Montego rather than a Princess, but it doesn't, as I said in my last letter. The biggest sin of all is that the 48K mode is not fully compatible with all the 48K programs.

I have nothing against the 128/ Plus 2 in theory. I agree that the only way forward in a world full of computer buffs with large software libraries, is to build machines which are more modern and efficient, while incorporating emulators so that old software can be used.

However, where the 128/ Plus 2 falls down is that it isn't modern and efficient, and the emulator is far from perfect.

So, I hope his has cleared up any misunderstandings of my letter — the Spectrum is a fine machine — but it is a crime that it is still available as a new machine.

**P A Rosbotham, Hedlington, York**

*A crime! There are a lot of people out there who have yet to experience the fun of owning a Spectrum . . . what's criminal about giving them a chance to join in the fun?*

*Your analogy about cars doesn't quite hold true I'm afraid. The basic mode of transport for programs, the Spectrum, might be considered a little outdated nowadays, but there is such a thing as a classic car! I've always maintained that it is how a machine is used by programmers that counts when it comes to providing entertainment. In car terms, you could still have a lot of fun driving your old Princess, especially if a competent team of mechanics looked after it and continued to improve its performance.*

*Take a look at the Starglider review this issue if you need any more convincing . . .*

**LM**

## POINTLESS LETTER!

Dear Lloyd,

I thought it's about time I wrote a letter to you. So I painstakingly (good word that, see LMLWD) analysed past FORUMs to try and find one indisputable link between all the letters. I found it: it's the fact that they all have points (heavy, medium or light but always points). So this letter will be different: no matter how carefully you scan these words you won't find the slightest hint of a point. No, no point in this sentence! Nor this! Neither this!

Well there you go then, a totally new and refreshing letter.

**Tom Evans, Northampton**

PS Please print a double-sided photo of Hannah Smith, suitably positioned (knoworimean) OOPS! that's a point.

*Refreshing?*

*Perhaps you're missing the point, and reading the wrong kind of magazine . . .*

**Another year draws to a close, and with it comes the third anniversary of CRASH. The changes I have seen since first setting up my Hermes in the CRASH office and starting work on the Playing Tips column are immense — for one thing the Towers is now bursting at the seams with magazines and people.**

**The only aspect of CRASH that hasn't improved, to my mind, is my salary. Maybe 1987 will be a good year for me. I hope it is for you. Don't forget, I'm here waiting for your postal missives — and the more I receive, the better my chances of negotiating a pay rise! Write to me at the usual address: LLOYD MANGRAM's FORUM, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.**

# VOTE FOR THE BEST GAMES OF THE YEAR!




Christmas comes but once a year — and with it, the CRASH Readers Awards. This is your chance to tell members of the software industry what you think of their games, their programmers and their advertisements. Vote for the games, the people and the adverts which you feel are worthy of praise. Fill in the form over the page and send it to us as fast as you can so our Database Minion can get to work analysing the results. The first 10 forms drawn out of the bag on 20th January 1987 — the closing date — will earn their senders £20 worth of software and a CRASH T-Shirt!

The results should be published in the March issue of CRASH and shortly thereafter the certificates of accolade will be awarded to the winning companies. Well then, what are you waiting for? Get to it!

In each appropriate category enter the name of the program and the software house for which you wish to vote. Please note: products must have a 1986 copyright to be eligible. There's no need to fill in every category — if you can't think of a suitable candidate, leave the relevant category blank. Obviously the more you fill in the better the end result will be.

Once you've completed as much of the form as possible, remove this page from the magazine (or photocopy it) and send it to us. Don't forget to write your name, address and T-Shirt size (small, medium or large) on the form in CAPITAL LETTERS!

**BEST GAME OVER ALL**
Title & Software House

**BEST PLATFORM GAME**
Title & Software House

**BEST SHOOT EM UP**
Title & Software House

**BEST ARCADE ADVENTURE**
Title & Software House

**BEST ADVENTURE**
Title & Software House

**BEST STRATEGY GAME**
Title & Software House

**BEST SIMULATION**
Title & Software House

**BEST GRAPHICS**
Title & Software House

**BEST MUSIC**
Title & Software House

**BEST SOUND FX**
Title & Software House

**BEST PROGRAMMER**

**BEST SOFTWARE HOUSE**

**BEST ADVERTISMENT**
Title & Software House

**LEAST PLEASING GAME**
Title & Software House

And, for the most outstanding programming achievement of 1986

**STATE OF THE ART AWARD**
Title & Software House

CRASH Readers' Awards

**Please send this form to ZZAP! READERS AWARDS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB to arrive no later than January 20th**

Name ..........................................................

Address ..........................................................

..........................................................

.................... Postcode ....................................

T-Shirt Size ..........................................................

# FOOTBALL F

## Nearly £1,900 worth of prizes on offer!

There have been board games about football and there have been computer games about football. But never a football board game which uses a computer. Until now — CDS has come up with *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes*.

The game is for two to five people — each player manages a team of footballers with the aim of making lots of money and leading the footballing world. Having plonked themselves down around a table, one of their number is nominated as computer operator and another as banker. Then the computer randomly generates a squad of footballers for each player.

A deck of footballer cards is included with the game, and each footballer is assigned a playing strength between one (awful) and five (Maradonna/Pele etc). Each player's start-up team consists of one goalkeeper, four defenders, three mid-field men, three forwards, and two utility men who can play in any position.

Once the computer has detailed the individual strengths for a player's team, it's time to hunt through the player cards and assemble the squad. Some money is then dealt to the players and the season starts.

The computer rolls the dice for each player in turn. A counter is moved around a board, and different actions must be taken depending on the square a player lands on. Many involve computer generated random events, and can range from handy to disastrous.

Once all players have taken a turn, matches are played. The computer generates the fixture list, and asks the players to enter the strength of their squads. Each player arranges the players in his possession and adds up their points value to give a total for defence, midfield and attack. The computer then works out a list of results, taking into account team strengths.

*Football Fortunes* operates in a single Division of twelve clubs and a season consists of eleven matches — fortunately there is no demotion. The name of the game is scoring points (Brian), and to do this, you've got to be successful in the League, or The Cup. After the first season, the clubs go into one of the European contests — Cup Winners Cup, European Cup or UEFA cup depending on their performance last season.

Deals can be made between managers for the loan or sale of players and in times of financial crisis players may be mortgaged to the bank. Landing on one of the Auction squares on the board brings a new footballer onto the market: a card is turned over on the pack and the competing managers bid for his services.

Gate money is shared out between teams each time a match is played and goes into the funds held by each manager to be spent on buying players, or if sudden financial pressures are caused by a player landing on a hazard. The worst financial hazard is wages — landing on the wrong square means the overpaid prima maradonnas have to be paid according to their points value — and they can cost you an arm and a leg.

The game arrives in a neat plastic library case, on cassette, and for £14.95 you get all the player cards, a board, the counters and a full set of instructions. It should be available for the Spectrum shortly after you read this — expect a full review in the February Issue . . .






*The complete FOOTBALL FORTUNES kit, as it appears in the prototype. As you read this, the game should be making its way to the shops.*

# FORTUNES...

Crash Competition

**25 COPIES OF *BRIAN CLOUGH'S FOOTBALL FORTUNES* TO BE WON!**






## WIN A SMALL FORTUNE

## £1,500 IS WAITING TO BE SPENT ON A HOLIDAY!

The football-mad fellows up at CDS have agreed to sponsor a sporting holiday of a lifetime . . . they've passed on a cheque for £1,500 to us, which we've lodged with our solicitors. Now all that money is waiting to be claimed . . .

The lucky winner of this competition in honour of *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes* will be able to spend the money being held at our solicitors on a holiday anywhere in the world — so long as they attend a sporting event. If you can bear to wait that long, you could take a trip to the Olympics in Barcelona, but £1,500 should go a long way towards getting you to Seoul. Fancy watching the Superbowl from the stands or The Americas Cup down under?

If you win, it's up to you where you go — we'll do all we can to help you plan your trip and secure tickets, and remember, there's a £1,500 budget to spend, courtesy of CDS.

You might think we'd set a terribly difficult competition to sort out a winner . . . but no! All you have to do is name the last five football teams to win the FA Cup and mention the year in which they won it. Jot your answers down on the back of a postcard and then write a few words, explaining where you would like to go if you win, which sporting event you would attend and why.

The sender of an all-correct entry with the best choice of destination and reason for going will win the £1,500 holiday prize. Twenty five runners-up will be able to try their hand at surviving in the cut and thrust world of football by playing a complimentary copy of *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes*.

So get your sporty thinking caps on and whizz those entries in to **BRIAN CLOUGH, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB before January 1987.**

# LLOYD MANGRAM'S LOOKBACK AT 1986

**Another hectic year has all but drawn to a close in CRASH terms, and the last pages of this Christmas Special are making their way from the typesetters 'up' to ART. I am left here putting the finishing touches to my annual review of the year, before I cycle across town to the Grovel Hill headquarters of LM to make my contribution to the January issue. It has been a very busy year, and I forsee even busier times ahead. I only wish my pay increased in direct proportion to my workload. . . .**

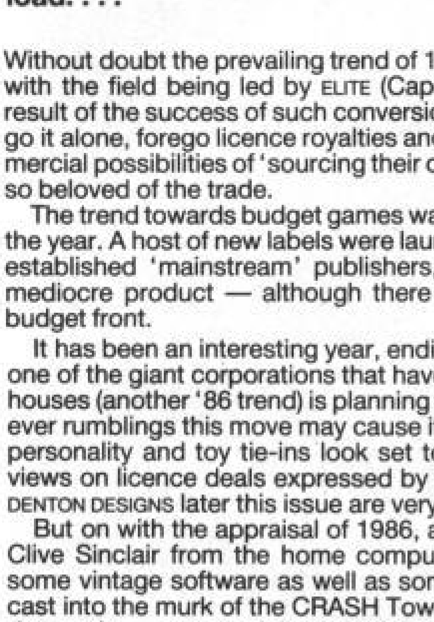
Without doubt the prevailing trend of 1986 was for coin-op conversions, with the field being led by ELITE (Capcom) and IMAGINE (Konami). As a result of the success of such conversions, Konami have now decided to go it alone, forego licence royalties and capitalise on the immense commercial possibilities of 'sourcing their own product' to slip into the jargon so beloved of the trade.

The trend towards budget games was difficult to avoid spotting during the year. A host of new labels were launched, most of them coming from established 'mainstream' publishers, and most of them turning out mediocre product — although there were a few bright spots on the budget front.

It has been an interesting year, ending with dark rumours that at least one of the giant corporations that have been acquiring smaller software houses (another '86 trend) is planning to leave the market in 1987. Whatever rumblings this move may cause if it takes place, the TV, film, book, personality and toy tie-ins look set to continue almost unabated. The views on licence deals expressed by the CANVAS team in our feature on DENTON DESIGNS later this issue are very interesting. . . .

But on with the appraisal of 1986, a year which saw the departure of Clive Sinclair from the home computer market, and which produced some vintage software as well as some games that have already been cast into the murk of the CRASH Towers cellar, never to see the light of day again . . . some might even argue that they should never have seen the light of day in the first place. . . .

## JANUARY




The Christmas Special for 1985/6, which is really the January issue, got the year off to a good start for MASTERTRONIC, who collected a Smash for *Spellbound*, scoring a very respectable 95% overall. This was a good beginning to the year for programmer David Jones and his cute character Magic Knight — and it wasn't to be his only Smash of the year . . .

The year also began auspiciously (LMLWD) for Walsall-based software house ELITE, who collected one Smash for a surprise game which they were sent from out of the blue: *Roller Coaster*, and another for the first of many coin-op conversions they were to produce during the following twelve months: *Commando*. In fact, ELITE had decided to go for a placing in the upper echelons of the software industry during 1986 — and during the year they released a lot of very strong products, concentrating mainly on coin-op conversions.

The end of 1985 saw MIKRO-GEN's brave attempt at improving the Spectrum's capabilities with the launch of the *Mikro-Plus*, an interface that included a ROM, and allowed programmers to write larger games for the basic 48K machine. Sadly, the first (and only) game to appear on the *Mikro-Plus* system, *Shadow of the Unicorn* wasn't anything terribly special. At £14.95 it was expensive; retailers, however, didn't get to make their standard percentage of the selling price — the hardware add-on cost over £4.00 to manufacture — and it wasn't a very attractive proposition to the trade. The whole concept, greeted with enthusiasm in some quarters and as the answer to piracy in others (a *Mikro-Plus* game could only run with the hardware, and each game needed its own special interface), fizzled out rapidly. MIKRO-GEN were left with an embarrassingly large quantity of redundant units, and entered 1986 licking their corporate wounds. Innovation doesn't always pay off. . . .

After one of the longest delays in software publishing history (but not the longest!), PSS released *Swords and Sorcery* — the innovative dungeon-exploring game they had been working on for an embarrassinly long period of time. Derek Brewster was impressed, and the game duly collected a Smash. Later in the year, Role-Playing purists were to attack *S&S* in the Signpost, but there was no doubt that Mike Simpson had broken new ground and crammed his game with artificial intelligence routines. Still no news, at the end of the year, of the promised expansion modules for dungeon explorers though . . .

Liverpudlian software house ODIN followed up their excellent *Nodes of Yesod* with *Robin of the Wood*, a graphically stunning arcade adventure. They then began to put themselves on the software map as the producers of quality games — an epithet that their sister company, THOR never quite managed to achieve. Coincidentally, *Robot Messiah* from ALPHABATIM, a new company, was also reviewed in the Christmas Special. Early in the New Year, ODIN and ALPHABATIM were at legal loggerheads over graphic routines — a little dispute that was quickly settled.

Clive Townsend, a newcomer to the Spectrum programming scene groomed by DURELL, waded in with his first game *Saboteur*, and collected his first Smash. What a start to a programming career! INSIGHT also stepped into the CRASH Smash Hall of Fame with a neat shoot em up, *Vectron*, which was to emerge later in the year as a re-release from FIREBIRD. 1986 was to be a year of corporate acquisitions . . .


SPELL-BOUND

R·O·L·L·E·R C·O·A·S·T·E·R

## FEBRUARY




Christmas has become a landmark for the software industry. Obviously, people are in the mood for spending money during the festive season, and software houses have always rushed to get their best products on the shelves in time for the shopping boom. Last year a lot of games missed the 'peak' selling period, and to quite a few people's surprise, still sold remarkably well. Again in 1986, games continued selling well throughout the year — we heard reports that even the slump in demand during the summer was hardly noticeable.

The February Issue wasn't short of Smashes. After living on tenterhooks for months (ever since Jeremy 'I want a Zoid' Spencer first talked to MARTECH and the ELECTRONIC PENCIL COMPANY), we were finally treated to the finished *Zoids* in CRASH Towers. To a being, we were impressed, awarding the game 96% overall. I have spotted one or two voices of dissent in my mailbag since then, but looking back I still maintain that the game was a major achievement. One of the better toy tie-ins, that shines like a beacon above *Transformers*, for instance . . .

The new IMAGINE, run and owned by OCEAN — who purchased the name from amongst the ashes of the original debacle (LMLWD), also kicked into February with some powerful products. Two coin-op conversions from the Konami arcade achieved Smash status: *Yie Ar Kung Fu* and *Mikie*. IMAGINE managed to keep up this pressure throughout the year . . .

An unbroken track record was maintained by ULTIMATE with *Gunfright*, which used the same techniques as *Nightshade*, but included a great deal more in the way of gameplay. *Sweevo's World* finally caught up with our deadlines, and was finished in time for a proper review in February — having been treated to no less that two previews in the months before as it neared completion. The game was a gentle departure for GAR-

GOYLE — it was more of an arcade adventure than previous releases, so much so that Greg Follis described it as 'a piece of whimsy'. More radical departures from the puzzle-intensive style of programming were due from the Dudley trio later in the year . . .

A frustratingly simple game arrived from Spanish software house DINAMIC, courtesy of GREMLIN, who also 'imported' *Rocco*, one of three boxing simulations that vied with each other in the Spectrum ring for supremacy. *West Bank* took the reaction-test type of game to its logical limit — all you have to do is press one of three keys to fire through one of three doors presented on the screen. Shoot the right person or object and points are won, shoot the wrong person or a bomb and lives are lost. Almost minimalist in its simplicity, the game proved mightily addictive. As a budget game it would almost certainly have been a Smash, but at £7.95 it earned a respectable 84%.

Regarded by some as the best of the boxing simulations, ACTIVISION's boxing game was endorsed by Barry McGuigan. Although it arrived months after *Rocco* and *Frank Bruno* entered the ring, the extra training appeared to give it the edge. On the adventure front, ACTIVISION did particularly well with *Mindshadow*, which Derek recommended heartily to anyone with the vaguest interest in adventuring.

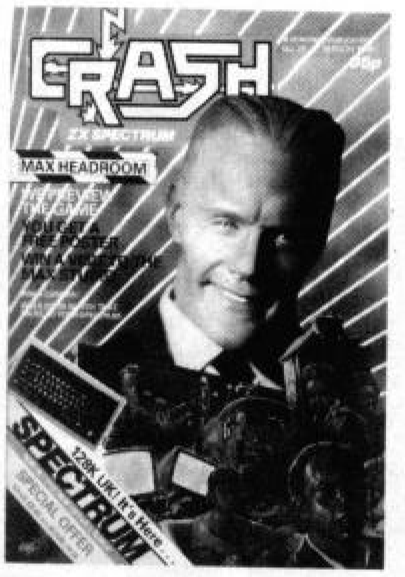
Budget masters MASTERTRONIC provided a rapid illustration of the way in which 'cheapies' can vary in quality. They followed up on their Christmas Smash with an appalling little game called *1985* (this would have been more aptly titled 1982), and the more respectable *Soul of a Robot*. It just goes to show that reading reviews is highly important when contemplating the purchase of budget titles.

Two companies that were to fade away quietly during 1986 appeared in FRONTLINE: CENTRAL SOLUTIONS who specialised in 'Budget' budget games (most of their catalogue had a retail price of 99p), weighed in with a mediocre strategy game called *Just Imagine*, while REELAX GAMES revealed their approach to commerce with *The Trading Game*. Neither impressed our tame strategist, Sean Masterson.

FIREBIRD, who had been quiet for a while, popped out with a retuned, machine-coded version of *Runestone*, which they had snapped up when THE GAMES WORKSHOP decided that publishing software wasn't a role they wanted to play.




## MARCH




The Ides of March proved favourable for MIKRO-GEN — they staged a dramatic recovery from the *Mikro-Plus* setback by pumping three games onto the market and collecting Smashes for two of them. *Sir Fred* was 'imported' from Spain, and the endearing cartoon graphics combined with tricky gameplay had the hero knight trying to rescue his damsel in the middle of a game which became a Smash. *Three Weeks in Paradise*, which proved to be postively the last of the Wally Week games (so it seems, at least) also collected a Smash. Another MIKRO-GEN game, an in-house shoot em up vaguely tied in to the TV series behind its title, *Battle of the Planets*, fared slightly less well at the hands of our reviewing team.

The talented team at DENTON DESIGNS also paraded two games in front of the CRASH joysticks — the follow-up to *Shadowfire*, called *Enigma Force* and an original, multi-facetted romp featuring sludge monsters and slime beasts entitled *Cosmic War Toad*. Both games missed Smash status quite narrowly.

In fact, Liverpudlian companies featured very prominently in March — OCEAN turned in *Rambo* and *NOMAD*, achieving parallel ratings of 79%, while IMAGINE released the work of a Hungarian programmer in the form of *MOVIE*, gaining not an Oscar but a Smash.

In fact. releasing games in pairs seemed all the rage. DESIGN DESIGNer Simon Brattel completed work on *Forbidden Planet*, which was in effect a follow up to *Dark Star*, and Graham Stafford sent us a production copy of *2112 AD*, the game which starred canine hero Poddy.

Two Commodore specialists also released Spectrum games. *Yabba Dabba Doo* appeared on QUICKSILVA's label and was written by the TASKSET programmers, and WIZARD DEVELOPMENTS, the company set up by Commodore star Tony Crowther, gave Spectrum owners the benefit of a conversion of *William Wobbler*. They didn't regard it as much of a benefit, it seems . . .

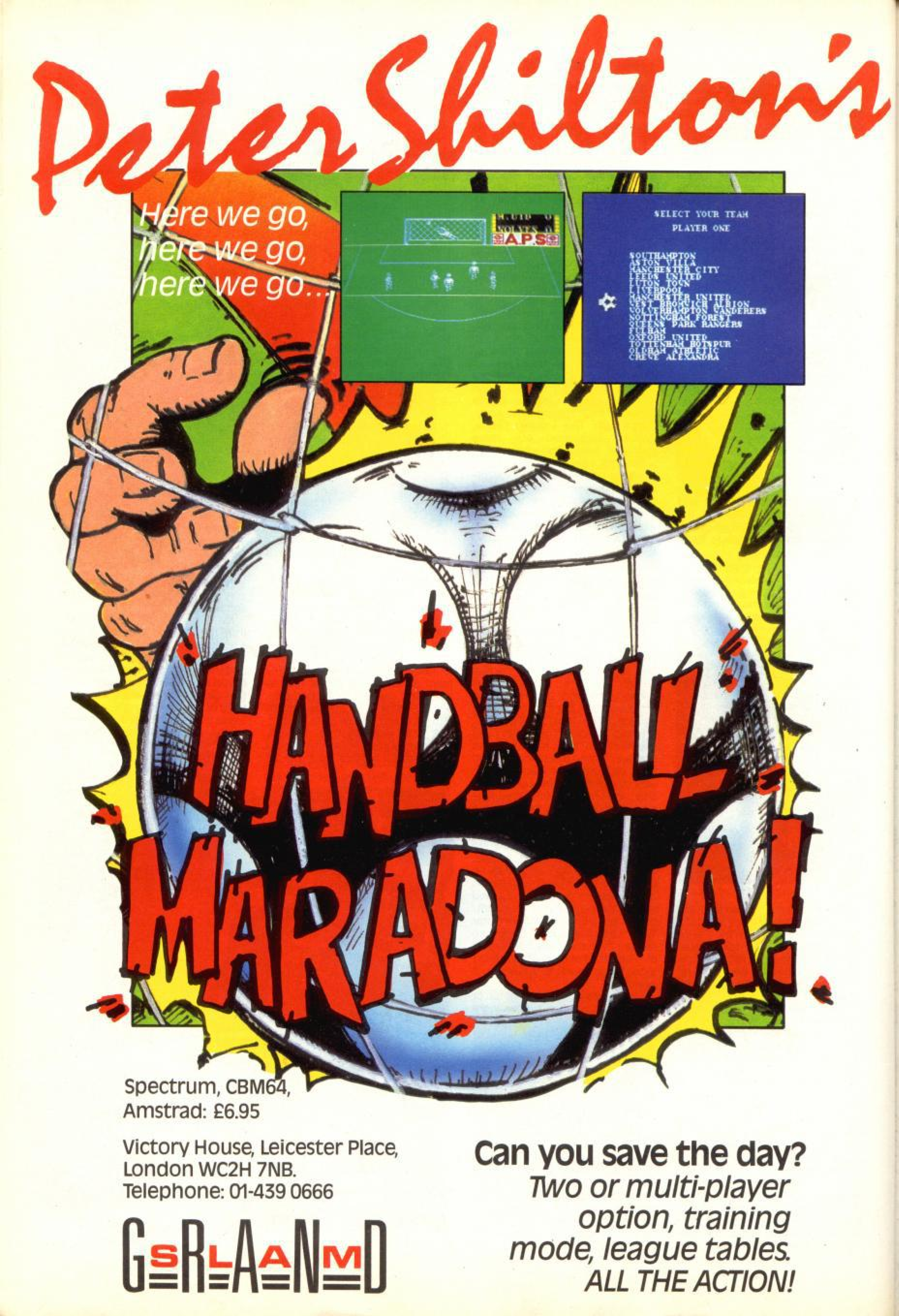
March was positively a month of '2's. Two adventure games were Smashed: *Lord of the Rings* and *Worm in Paradise*, the third part of LEVEL 9's *Silicon Dream* trilogy. Two games came from the US GOLD stable, one good one poor — *Winter Games* and *Zorro* respectively. And the World War Two strategy/wargame that put you in control of Britain's airbourne defences during the Battle Of Britain, *Their Finest Hour* was looked at twice, by both Derek and Sean, collecting a Smash from FRONTLINE. MIRRORSOFT completed the Spitfire picture for avid fans with the release of their flight simulation, *Spitfire 40*, which zoomed up to the heady heights of a CRASH Smash.

Mel Croucher, the man behind *Deus Ex Machina* and *Pimania* amongst other things, came back from a short self-imposed exile researching into new hardware and the software possibilities it opens up, to produce *ID* for CRL — an unusual, text-based entertainment in which the player had to coax and cajole a frightened personality hiding in the Spectrum into revealing details of its past.

A few weak games arrived, including some budget titles and a very tedious football quiz, but all things considered, March was a very good month for Spectrum software . . .

Not a bad month for the Spectrum itself, come to that. We took a look at the new 128K machine Sir Clive launched on the public, and the speculation as to whether it would be a success began. Now that Christmas is here, if the contents of my postbag reflect the real world there is still plenty of speculation about the viability of Amstrad's relaunched 128, the Spectrum Plus Two.




Peter Shilton's
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# LLOYD MANGRAM'S LOOKBACK AT 1986

## APRIL




Whatever 'Old Wives' say about showers during this month — it doesn't hold true for games, although it rained games at CRASH Towers there was only one Smash in the shower. **ELITE** turned in a straightforwad implementation of *Bombjack*, which was devoid of frills but deliciously playable. Not a case of pushing the Spectrum to its limits, but a very entertaining and faithfully executed conversion.

A trio of games from **FIREBIRD**'s so-called 'hot' range turned out to be not-so-hot. Worst amongst the bunch was *Gerry The Germ*, a game full of wit — well alright then, well-worn puerile humour — which lacked in the playbility department and attracted a very lukewarm 45%. The duo behind *Costa Caper*, Messrs Marsden and Cooke (remember *Technician Ted*?) got a bit warmer and collected 64%. 'Hotrangewise' as Herbie *Hyperbole* Wright of **FIREBIRD** might so easily have said, the lead game was *Rasputin*, a jolly 3D romp against the forces of evil.

Star newcomer to the software world during April was Richard Welsh, whose homegrown program Frank The Flea warmed everyone's heart, and earned a very respectable 57% for the novice programmer. We haven't heard from Richard recently, but his last stated intention was to buy a compiler and start writing games that run in machine code.

Julian Rignall, one of the 'Spiky Haired Ones' from ZZAP! who terrorise the Competition Minion, filled a guest slot by looking at the new games released for the 128K Spectrum and found himself gently impressed by the capabilities of the new machine. Praise indeed, from a dedicated Commodore arcadester.

As things turned, the final review for the rather strange surfing game, *Surfchamp* created by Irish software house **NEW CONCEPTS**, was not as disparaging as most people in the Towers expected it to be. Perhaps the psychological effect of using a rather silly-looking plastic surfboard didn't have as detrimental an effect as we first supposed. . . . The **NEW CONCEPTS** advertisement hit an all-time low in terms of artwork standards, while their promotional Sweat Shirts hit an all time high in the office. Isn't life strange?

The new **BUG BYTE**, now owned in name by **ARGUS PRESS SOFTWARE**, chipped in with a couple of budget games, the best of which was the rather tweely named *Sodov The Sorceror* in which you were involved in asking marauding dragons to go away. Well, *Go Away The Sorceror* wouldn't have had much of a ring to it according to **BUG BYTE** supremo, Peter Holme . . . *Roboto* contributed little to the world of budget games, but *Realm of Impossibility* contributed nothing positive to the games-playing world or **ARIOLASOFT**'s credibility. At £1.99 it would have been a very weak title, better suited to release back in the pre-Issue 1 days, but at £7.95 in 1986 it was lucky to collect 10% overall. For the same money, **ARIOLASOFT** were offering *Think!*, a very compelling icon-driven puzzle game designed by **TIGRESS**, or for a pound more you could buy *Skyfox* from the same company — a very competent flight simulator. Perhaps *Realm of Impossibility* was **ARIOLASOFT**'s April Fool joke . . .

Other disappointments for April (apart from Robin Candy's face on the cover and all over his Playing Tips supplement) included a new release from **ELECTRIC DREAMS** who had got off to a reasonable start with *I, of the Mask* and *Riddler's Den*. *Winter Sports* was less than state of the art, and arriving as it did almost in parallel with **US GOLD/EPYX**'s *Winter Games*, a newly formed reputation was dented. *Blade Runner*, from **CRL** was another disappointment — this time for film fans. No doubt the licence was an expensive one, but the product it inspired wasn't . . . well, wasn't inspired.

Overall, April was an interesting month, which saw a wide range of software released including a football league strategy/simulation, a couple of puzzle games, a show jumping simulation (from **ALLIGATA** — who resisted the temptation to get their product endorsed and ended up doing a reasonable job on an offbeat subject), a surfing simulation and a collection of more usual, run-of-the mill release. Most embarrassing game of the month had to be *Transformers*, released by **OCEAN** and programmed by . . . **DENTON DESIGNS**. Not their best work by a long chalk.




## MAY




'Never cast a clout 'til May's out' my grandmother used to remind us all. Now we've entered the Binary Age, maybe software houses should update the saying and make sure that they never master 'til the bugs are out. May's games were bug-free, and although rather fewer in number than other months, they tended to be rather higher in quality.

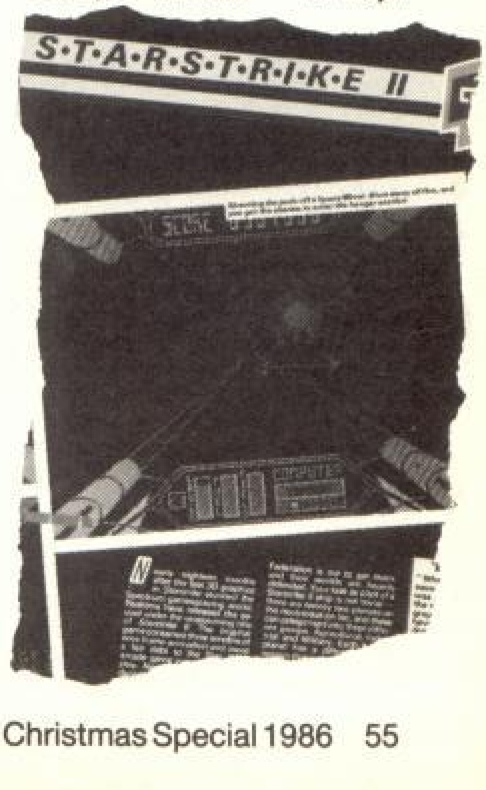
Lead Smash of the month was the eagerly awaited *Starstrike II* from the Masters of 3D (joint holders with Simon Brattel), **REALTIME**. According to Plan A, *Starstrike II* was due for release before Christmas, and the trio at **REALTIME** invested a significant sum advertising the fact. Sadly, as is so often the case, deadlines slipped and the game was ready for release (without bugs) several months later than scheduled.

Nevertheless, it went down well in the Towers, earning gasps of admiration from every reviewer who saw it on the CRASH office Spectrums, it was clearly worth the wait. As I sit in my cramped office penning (well Hermes-ing) these words, all the reviewers in the CRASH office are currently gasping in admiration in front of another **REALTIME** game, this time *Starglider*, released by **RAINBIRD**. They haven't lost their touch . . .

**ULTIMATE** released their penultimate game for 1986 — *Cyberun*, which duly scraped a Smash and joined another Konami conversion from **IMAGINE**, *Ping Pong* at the 90% mark. *Matchday* programmer Jon Ritman launched his slick 3D version of *Batman* on the world via **OCEAN**, impressing Batman fans everywhere with the gloss and attention to detail invested in the program. And **GREMLIN**'s combat game, *Way of the Tiger* collected a creditable 93% which pleased the firm's boss, Ian Stewart, and meant that the tie-in with Knight Books and the Way of the Tiger series of interactive ninja fiction had paid off. Three companies had very near misses on the Smash front: **DURELL** still haven't completely forgiven us for spoiling their unblemished run of Smashes by awarding *Turbo Esprit* 88% overall; Mike Daniels of **GLOBAL** winced audibly when he phoned in to discover that *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes*, the first of his 'Golden Turkey' film tie-ins, had just been pipped at 89% while **IMAGINE** remained inscrutable about the 88% awarded to their conversion of Konami's *Green Beret*.

Rather unusually, a game from **ATLANTIS** got a double rating! opinion was so firmly divided in the office as to the merits of *Supercom*, a hacking game, that it received 86% overall AND 21% overall. Nothing like breaking with tradition . . .

Another combat game, this time a simultion of the pointy-stick school of Karate, was launched on the world by **MIRRORSOFT** but failed to add anything significant to the genre. *Exploding Fist* seems to be the classic in this field, even today. Another fighting game, this time of the bombs and bullets variety, came from **ALLIGATA**, who dared to upset **ELITE**, holders of the official *Commando* licence, with *Who Dares Wins II* which finally appeared on the Spectrum screen after some legal wrangling. With licences being expensive commodities, the precedent for defending game scenarios and concepts was set — a major



# LLOYD MANGRAM'S LOOKBACK AT 1986

departure from the early days, when I can remember a host of 'clones' appearing around every 'original' idea . . .

ELECTRIC DREAMS set off on the path to film tie-ins with a disappointing rendition of *Back to the Future*, while on the licence front *Max Headroom* broke the barrier to arrive on the Spectrum. Deliciously different, MARTECH decided to licence a front — Samantha Fox's — which appeared in pixellated form in *Sam Fox's Strip Poker*. Some commentators suggested that ARIOLASOFT should have been awarded that particular licence . . .

The first of the Lucasfilm games appeared from ACTIVISION in the shape of *Ballblazer* — another delayed release — but this time one which was greeted with a measure of apathy, and ATLANTIS did their best to squeeze the last dribbles of humour out of the C5 in *Revenge of the C5*.

## JUNE




Halfway through the year, and the June issue was very thin on the ground as regards licence deals and tie-ins. OCEAN's game about the lizard-aliens that starred in the series *V*, *The Young Ones* from ORPHEUS and the belatedly-reviewed *Friday 13th* from gore masters DOMARK were the only games that featured characters who had appeared on screens that weren't attached to a computer. There was nothing special about any of the three, and in fact *The Young Ones* was a fair old disappointment.

An octet of Smashes appeared, including the first ever Smash for a 128K game — *Knight Time* written for MASTERTRONIC by David Jones (and later to appear in a 48K version). Phil Churchyard, a regular contributor to Playing Tips POKEwise, collaborated with Paul Shirley to produce *Spindizzy* which collected a Smash for ELECTRIC DREAMS, and made up for a couple of mediocre releases from the Southampton-based company started by Rod Cousens.

Two adventuresome games collected Smashes, *Heavy on the Magick* from Derek and *Redhawk* from the reviewing team. It looks as if GARGOYLE are going to be giving their adventure/puzzle games a bit of a rest for a while as they concentrate on their arcade label, but MELBOURNE HOUSE released the follow-up to *Redhawk*, *Kwah* just in time for a review in this Issue. And second time around, Derek Brewster gets to evaluate the caped (or should that be feathered?) crusader's deeds of derring-do.

Mr Masterson took the unusual step of re-Smashing *Desert Rats* from CCS when it arrived in 128K form — claiming that he'd forgotten first time around on the 48K version! And the issue concluded with three more Smashes — ULTIMATE's last game of 1986, *Pentagram*, GREMLIN's vertically-scrolling platform variant with yet another ball as hero, *Bounder*, and *Quazatron* from Steve Turner on the HEWSONS label.

As months go, June was quite high quality — only five games received less than 60% overall, which indicated that a summer slump in games of quality was going to be avoided this year: as indeed it was.

Large and complicated arcade adventures were flavour of the month during June: A'n'F waded in with *Core*, PROBE went all robotic with *Mantronix*, and *Glass* programmer Paul Hargreaves completed the monster game *Tantalus* for QUICKSILVA.

A pair of sequels came under our reviewers' metaphorical microscopes — they liked *Alien Highway* from VORTEX, the follow-up to *Highway Encounter*, but disliked *Mugsy's Revenge* from MELBOURNE, which was only saved from a trashing by the fact that a free copy of *Mugsy* was included on the tape.

Despite the awful artwork in the advertisement, *Legend of the Amazon Women* proved to be a passable beat em up from US GOLD, while the budget arm of the same enterprise offered the pseudo-mystical *Secret of Levitation*, which failed to rise above the half-way mark in percentage terms.

The Telecom team at FIREBIRD went hedgehog crazy with *Spiky Harold*, but failed to take advantage of the licensing opportunity on the doorstep of CRASH Towers — the British Hegehog Presevation Society has is headquarters a few miles away from my home and I regularly encounter its leading light, one Major Adian Coles, as he constructs little ramps for the spiky creatures to use to clamber out of cattle grids . . . FIREBIRD's other June offering, rather late for the event it parodied, was *The Comet Game*, a space romp loosely based on the arrival of Halley's comet — which had turned tail and travelled deep into space when the game was released.

Time and celestial bodies wait for no man, and nor do American Footballers. All the razamatazz surrounding the Superbowl had faded in the memory of Channel 4 viewers by the time OCEAN got to the shops with *Superbowl*.

Unexpected arrival of the month award went to ADDICTIVE who came to CRASH Towers without Kevin Toms, without *Football Manager* and with *Kirel* a cute jumping game that won the heart of our Girlie Tipster, Hannah Smith . . .


Reviews
KIREL
Producer: Addictive
Retail price: £8.95
Author: Siegfried Kurtz

## JULY




The summer season began with a quartet of Smashes — and four very different games they were. Over in adventureland, Derek was knocked out by LEVEL 9's *Price of Magik* — a follow on to *Red Moon* — which sends the player on a quest to learn about the mystical arts. Derek insists that each of LEVEL 9's successive releases contain that bit more magic, in terms of what they can do with the Spectrum. Another classic coin-op conversion left the ELITE stable in the form of *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*, and marketeers extraordinaire DOMARK, finally collected their first ever Smash for *Spitting*, sorry, *Splitting Images*. A very simple, and indeed ancient concept — the sliding block puzzle — gained a new lease of life.

Could GREMLIN get the hat-trick? In May they had a Smash, in June another. July came, and with it the terrible antics of a wicked character who could so easily have been the creation of an artist working for THE BEANO. *Jack The Nipper* put an interesting slant on the arcade adventure format, amused everyone and did indeed collect a Smash.

Three games that everyone had great expectations for also arrived this month, and each of them proved a disappointment. *Biggles* from MIRRORSOFT certainly hadn't been flying an undercover mission — the game was tied in with the film of the same name, and the level of promotion and publicity which it received meant that few people could have missed its impending arrival. When the game came in to land, however, it proved to be quite unremarkable. After a good six months' delay, MELBOURNE HOUSE released *Rock 'n' Wrestle*, which had lost the 'rock' on the way to the ring and, without the endorsement of Big Daddy, had very little to offer. July was also the month that we looked at the game which fell shortest of expectations; the most contentious game of 1986. *World Cup Carnival*. A major licence deal, a large box crammed with 'goodies', a cassette — a cassette containing a marginally revamped football game that originally appeared on the ARTIC label and was now very long in the tooth.

A handful of budget games arrived, most of them mediocre but *Snodgits* from SPARKLERS — a sort of detective game — took an unusual approach and proved very playable. FIREBIRD entered the budget arena with a combat-decathlon variant *Ninja Master*, and the adventure scene with *Seabase Delta* which somehow captured the imagination of Derek's readers, and was to appear in his letters page on a regular basis over the next few months.

FRONTLINE looked at a pair of games from PSS, one good, one not so good. *Theatre Europe*, a game with a rather sensationalist subject, was the better of the pair and seemed likely to encourage players to think about the implications of nuclear war, involving them as it did in making decisions about the launch of nuclear missiles. 'Everyone makes mistakes; this is PSS's' wrote Sean Masterson about *Iwo Jima*. You can't win 'em all!

*Molecule Man* from MASTERTRONIC and *Equinox* from MIKRO-GEN offered quality fare for fans of the arcade adventure, while MARTECH's cunning space game, which was tied-in with an astronomer, threw new light on the arrangement of our universe. *The Planets* managed to combine elements of arcade, adventure and educational games and presented a complicated and slightly daunting challenge to the player who set off on a mission to — yes, at least that part was 'standard' — to save the Earth from destruction.





## AUGUST




The summer of this year was nothing spectacular — maybe people kept releasing games because there was nothing more pleasant to do? Whatever the reason, we were flooded with budget titles this month — unfortunately they were mostly uninspiring.

Games involving balls were popular in 1986. Apart from kicking them and hitting them in sports simulations, they also had to be bounced, rolled and jumped through hostile terrain. *Bobby Bearing* from THE EDGE rolled out into the Metaplanes this month in search of his cousins and found a Smash on the way, and an anonymous football negotiated fire, nasty sharp pins and boxing gloves amongst a host of other nasties in MIRRORSOFT's flip screen arcade adventure *Action Reflex*.

Pumpkin fans got their chance to strike back in *Cauldron II*, PALACE's sequel in which a cute bouncy pumpkin (nearly a ball, but not quite) had to make his way round a flip screen castle in the best arcade adventure tradition, collecting the wherewithal to depose the evil Hag. Another Smash.

FIREBIRD (perhaps spotting Sean Masterson's favourable comments about an old RED SHIFT game, *Rebel Star Raiders* some months ago), launched a revamped version on their budget label and collected a Smash for their trouble. Spotting a gap in the market and then filling it, is without doubt, the route to commercial success!

Two quality arcade adventures also collected Smashes: *Pyracurse* from HEWSONS in which a large South American temple/tomb had to be explored 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' style, and *Heartland* from ODIN who by now had handed over the headaches of publishing games to FIREBIRD and were concentrating on writing them.

The first games arrived from the new budget label launched at chateau INTERCEPTOR — PLAYERS — they were met with an almost unanimous lukewarm reception, despite the Hip-Hop packaging. Our very own Derek Brewster also met with a poor review for his new game, *Con-quest* which appeared on MASTERTRONIC's MAD label.

A couple of clones poked their noses above the ramparts — ALLIGATA's BUDGIE label turned in a fair rendition of the *Wizard's Lair* theme with *Labyrinthion*, earning 60% overall, while ARIOLASOFT published another game from Dave Harper, *Toadrunner*, which bore a very striking resemblance to his earlier work for ELECTRIC DREAMS — *Riddler's Den*. ELECTRIC DREAMS themselves gave film tie-ins a rest to release *Hijack*, which puts the player in the role of a harrassed American official dealing with a terrorist incident.

Even though they collaborated with OCEAN, US GOLD didn't manage to do a particularly good job on their conversion of the ageing coin-op *Kung Fu Master*, and their second budget release on the AMERICANA label, *Subterranean Nightmare* turned out to be a bit of a bad dream.

The rush to budget software didn't appear to be producing anything special, with mediocre products from MASTERTRONIC, CENTRAL SOLUTIONS and ATLANTIS filling the remaining review pages. . . .



## SEPTEMBER




Things quietened down over September, but at last Oli was able to do the cover he'd been waiting to get to grips with, ever since he heard that *Dan Dare* was on its way from VIRGIN. Despite repeated requests, the team at VIRGIN simply hadn't allowed a single early screen shot out of their programming chamber, and when the game finally arrived it was a complete mystery. . . . Moments after it had loaded it became clear that the game did justice to the cartoon hero and a Smash was on the cards. VIRGIN's other game, *Atlantic Challenger* (which gives the player a chance to control VIRGIN supremo, ocean racer and litter campaigner Richard Branson) did less well. Maybe there should have been an arcade sequence in the park with one of those pointed sticks . . . This was a good year for MIKRO-GEN, but perhaps a slightly bad month — their new game which introduced 'Teenage Superhero' Ricky Steele missed Smash status by a single percentage point to the disappointment of all down in Bracknell, where Wally Week is in comfortable retirement.

Rod Bowkett's keenly-awaited follow up to *Dynamite Dan* was completed in time for review and lived up to expectations — another fairly straightforward platform game, but one with so many added touches that a Smash was inevitable. And two Smashes were awarded in the adventure world — one for *The Boggit*, a delightful spoof on Tolkien created by DELTA 4 and published by CRL, and another Smash for INCENTIVE's adventure-writing utility, *The Graphic Adventure Creator* which went on to take the homegrown adventure world by storm.

Flight simulator fans were treated to *ACE* by CASCADE, a company whose reputation was founded in the budget compilation market, and which moved towards mainstream games publishing with a very neat airborne combat simulation.

Saving film tie-ins for later in the year, ELECTRIC DREAMS went aquatic, producing a whimsical undersea romp by the name of *Mermaid Madness*, and an aqueous version of *Panzadrome* written by RAM JAM and called *Xarq*.

Rupert Bear and Dangermouse starred in games from BUG BYTE and SPARKLERS respectively, but failed to achieve superstar status, while Santa Claus made an unseasonally early appearance in a game from ALPHA OMEGA, the budget label created by CRL. No-one was likely to leave out a glass of sherry and a couple of mince pies for this Father Christmas. . . .

After the problems they experienced with *The Young Ones*, ORPHEUS decided to stop publishing games in their own right, and instead concentrate on providing a programming and conversion service for other companies. *Tujad* had been completed before The Decision was taken, and duly appeared on the ARIOLASOFT label, winning some admiration for the graphics, but breaking no new ground as an arcade adventure. French software house INFOGRAMES did try to break new ground on the adventure/role playing front, but somehow lost direction along the way with *Mandragore*.

As the September issue was being written, companies were gearing up for the Personal Computer World Show and seemed to be saving the best for their stands . . . with a massive preview section completed, the rest of the CRASH team departed for Olympia leaving yours truly to hold the fort.



# LLOYD MANGRAM'S LOOKBACK AT 1986

## OCTOBER




The Personal Computer World Show, as always, was an event and a half where all the leading lights of the software industry paraded their promises for Christmas. C&VG carefully avoided parading Melissa Ravenflame. Despite a hard-fought sticker war, the cartoon tipster failed to materialise leaving the Show floor to our own Girlie Tipster Hannah Smith.

*Trivial Pursuit* arrived on the DOMARK stand at the show, and collected another Smash for the marketeers in the October Issue — after a period in the doldrums (as far as ratings go anyway), DOMARK seemed set to make their mark. ELITE continued their coin-op conversions, launching *Paperboy* and *1942* — *Paperboy* came remarkably close to being a hit in the ratings, while the general consensus of opinion surrounding *1942* was that it was an accurate conversion of a rather dull game. But ELITE wasn't left out — *Scooby Doo*, a different version to the one originally planned in late '85 — collected a Smash. Domination of the HOTLINE Charts seemed to be ELITE's aim . . .

After a fairly long absence from the scene, VORTEX bounced back with a ball game from Costa Panayi — an elegant 3D puzzle cum arcade-adventure entitled *Revolution* which completed the trio of Smashes for the month.

Another bevy of budget games scurried in for review and were all poor to awful except for *Lap of the Gods* from MASTERTRONIC, which followed on from *One Man and His Droid* and collected 80%.

*Tennis* from IMAGINE got a poor reception — the best of the Konami coin-ops had already been converted, but the reception that *Knight Rider* received was even less favourable. Despite the interminably long wait (and the release of an early, completely different game through a mail order catalogue) OCEAN had very little to offer.

The seeds of controversy were sown in two reviews — *Head Coach* (see the Christmas FORUM) and *Zythum*. MIRRORSOFT weren't terribly impressed with our review and felt that we hadn't done the game justice . . . The favourable review *Strike Force Harrier* attracted did little to mollify the affront.

Newcomers PIRANHA certainly got their teeth into the software market, kicking off with *Trapdoor* and *Strike Force Cobra* and narrowly missing a Smash with Don Priestley's colourful interpretation of the TV series starring Berk and a host of strange creatures confined below the trapdoor.

The Spectrum Plus Two moved closer to being reality — sample machines had been on display at the PCW Show, but didn't get into the shops until much later. . . .







## NOVEMBER




Once again, lots of budget games came under scrutiny, and despite entries from MASTERTRONIC and AMERICANA, FIREBIRD lead the field in terms of quality with *Bombscare*, *Happiest Days of Your Life* (a Wally Week clone — maybe the hero's in retirement but the format still lives), *Olli and Lissa* and *Thrust*. The Telecom team were let down a little by *Kai Temple*, but no-one's perfect, especially in the budget world . . .

Smaller companies led the Smash field this month — DURELL provided a very unusual 3D game with an equally unusual title, *Fat Worm Blows A Sparky*, GARGOYLE treated everyone to an attribute-clash-free shoot em up, and CCS impressed our tame strategist with *Napoleon At War*. INFOGRAMES, though by no means a small company, came very close to a Smash with *L'Affaire Vera Cruz*, as did GREMLIN with *Trailblazer* and ARIOLASOFT with the original concept of *Deactivators*.

*Street Hawk* finally got into the High Street and proved to be a disappointment, but not as great a disappointment as *knight Rider*. *Asterix* was another long awaited game that proved less than wonderful, despite the protracted development time, and MELBOURNE HOUSE did nothing to improve their gently slipping image by releasing *Conquestador*, a cute but unremarkable arcade adventure.

Controversy began to rear its head again, when we awarded *Glider Rider* a Smash for the 128K machine, but didn't make a song and dance about it because the 48K game only merited 80%

Another bumper 164 page issue was planned for December, to cram in all the game reviews that we expected to have to cope with . . .




## DECEMBER




With Christmas fast approaching, software houses began revealing their prime programs. Out of some thirty games which we looked at last month, only five scored less than 60% overall. ALPHA OMEGA somehow don't seem to have penetrated the budget market with quite the right approach — their games have consistently failed to achieve good ratings. More Omega than Alpha, in fact, with *Dr What* collecting a mere 17%

CODEMASTERS entered the budget arena with a pile of titles, which received a warm reception.

Otherwise no major surprises as promised Christmas games arrived for review . . . Another twelve months of CRASHISTORY was ruled off in the ledger, and the New Year awaited eagerly.



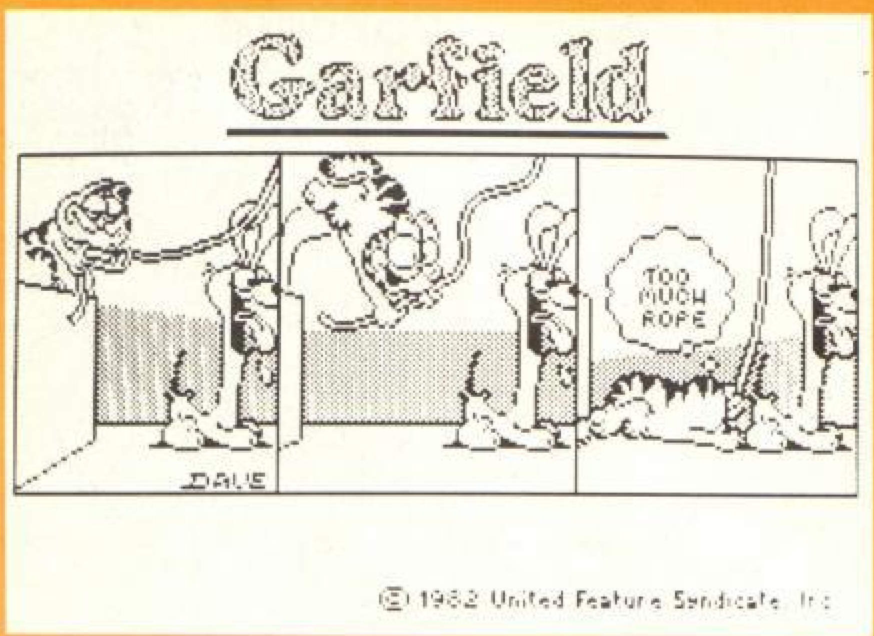

**ON THE SCREEN** is back yet again by popular request! Once more we bring you a selection of the very best in Spectrum 'artwork'! Loads of piccies came in the past few months, so if you don't see yours here, then try again! Anyway, these are the best of the ones that came in. . . .





*David Muir, of Melrose, in Scotland, came up with this interesting piece. The expressionless face looks on speculatively on the missiles that fly over the planet's surface, to wreak who knows how much destruction? Well drawn, although the colour choice is a bit bright.*

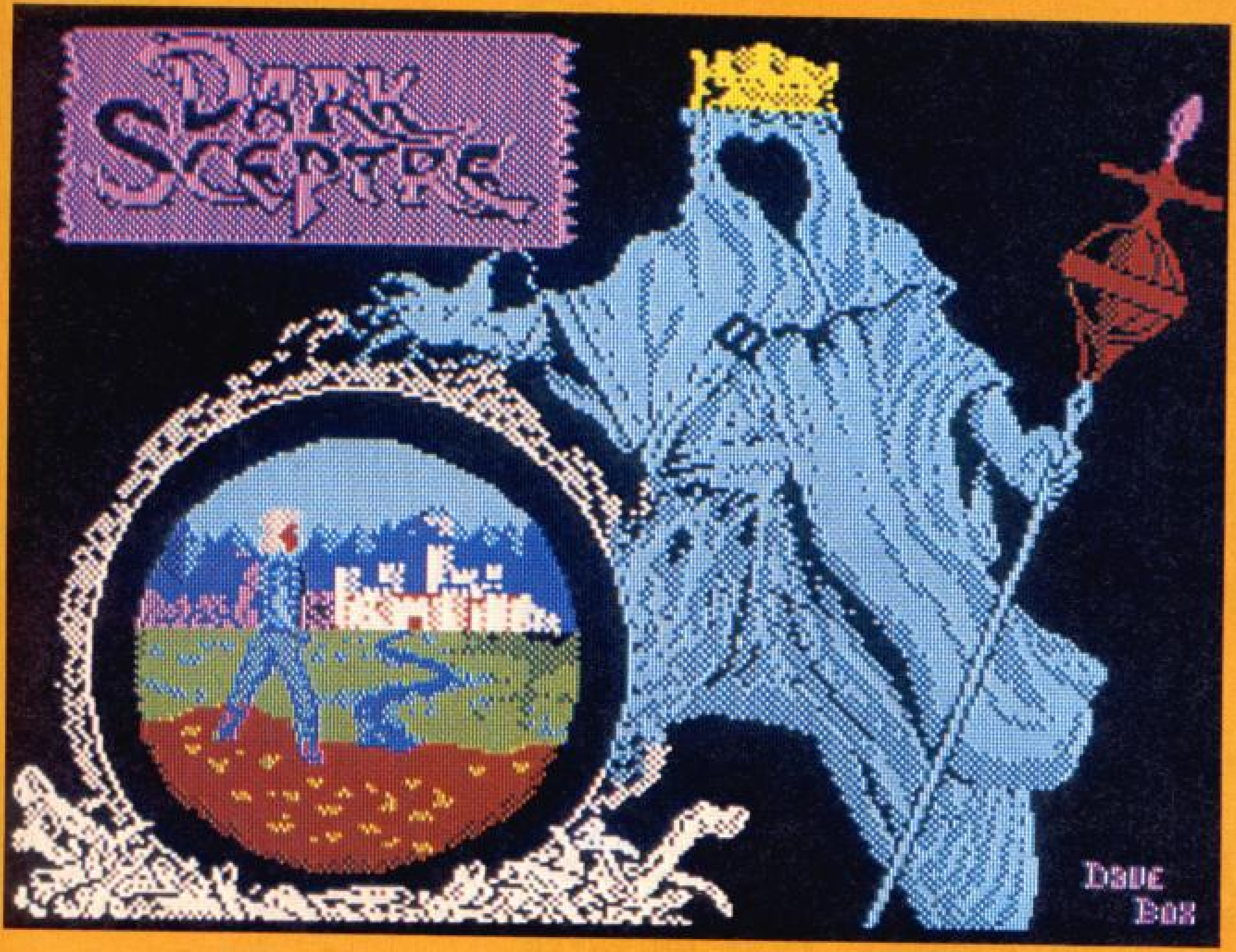





*I really like Garfield! Well, who doesn't? This petite cartoon is a simple rendition of everyone's favourite character, and although monochromatic, is very vell drawn, packing a lot of detail into a very small space. Claps and handshakes all round to, David McVeigh, of Belfast.*

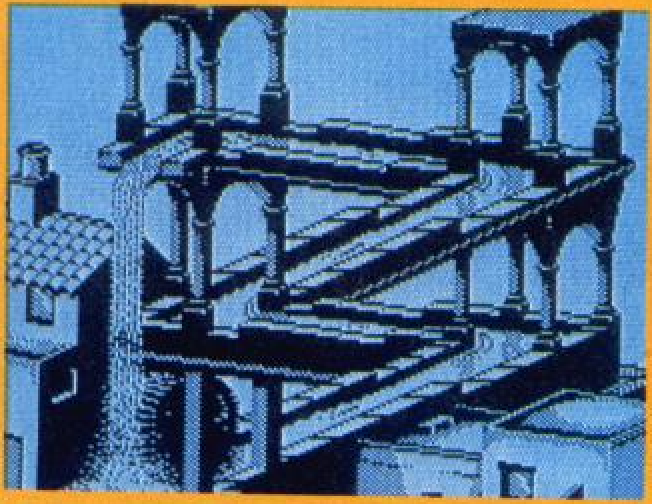
*This picture creates a great atmosphere. With the colourful Earth far, far, away in the distance, the spaceman floats, totally alone, with nothing but a thin umbilical cord separating him from ..? Phil Leese of Chesterfield sent in this one, and the next one, too, came from that same stable..*

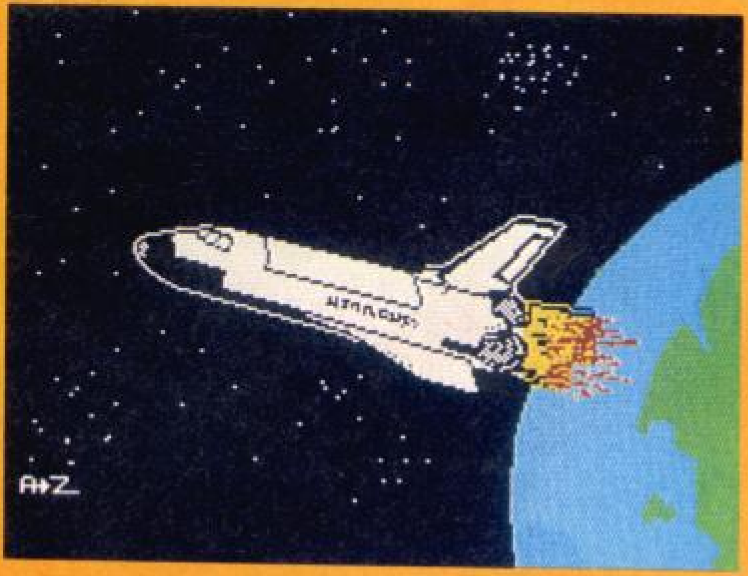





*It looks like the screen beat the game! While still waiting for the finished version of Mike Singleton's alleged megahit, this screen materialised on the Art Minion's desk. David Box, of Bristol, sent this one in, and I thought that this one deserved a mention because of all the excellent detail that the author packed in. (Nice scrolling routines, there, too, Dave!)*

*Despite the monochromatic nature of this one, I thought that the effect it created was excellent. I was surprised at the way that it translated from the canvas to the extremely low res of the Spectrum. Phil has made an admirable job of the transfer; I spent ages just looking at it and following it through!*






*Although somewhat of a cliche in computer artwork, this rendition of a space shuttle from Alan Jones is a colourful and nicely drawn version of this old favourite. The way colourclash has been avoided where the yellow and red tail is against the background of ocean and space is particularly clever. Alan hails from Airedale in West Yorkshire.*



*A goulish offering from the screen of Tony Hitchcock is this startling rendition of Oli Frey's December 1985 CRASH cover picture Friday 13th. I'm not sure about the purple blood, but the shading and attention to detail is very neat indeed. More than once it has been used to frighten away the rowdier elements from ZZAP and AMTIX when they've ventured into the office. All this gore is from Tony Hitchcock who gets the prize for our furthest flung contributor in Owhiro Bay, New Zealand.*

*That's your lot, then. Keep sending them in, but remember that if you want them sent back, then you have to stamp the envelope that you want it sending back in; and make sure the tape loads! All printed piccies get blow up into A3 in full colour by* RAINBIRD, makers of the *Art Studio*, who sponsor this page very kindly. Send 'em all into

**CRASH GALLERY, P.O. BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE. SY8 1DB.**

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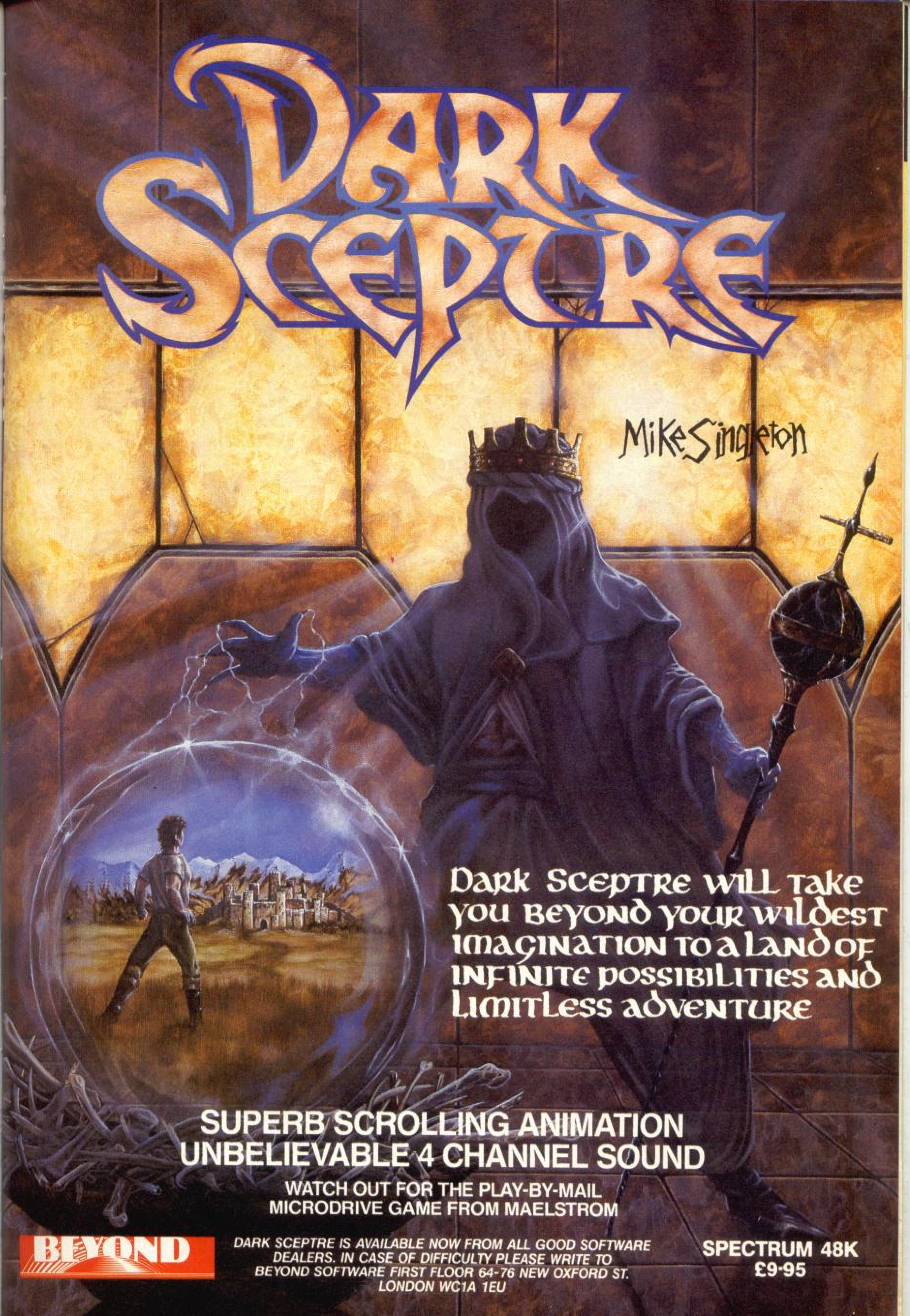


*Starglider* is a great new game that puts you firmly in the driving seat of an AGAV — Airborne Ground Attack Vehicle, an antiquated sub-light fighter craft produced by Draziw Industries. **RAINBIRD** are so pleased with their latest game, that they are offering a radio-controlled glider to the winner of this competition. What do you have to do? Draw something? No. Write something? No. Not a wordsquare please — anything but that!

Ohmygosh . . . Not a spot the difference (with hopefully some differences marked in?) No. Minion has finally broken the mould of competition writing, and pioneered a new style comp that anyone with slightly nimble fingers and a handful of talent can enter. What you must do is to take an A4 piece of paper (297mm x 210mm) and design an aeroplane by FOLDING the paper to shape (gasp! — what a revolutionary idea, I hear you all cry). Get your entries into the post, to wing their way here by the 20th of January. Lee, Graeme, the Girlie Tipster and I will then take your designs to the local park and put them through their paces.

The paper plane that proves to be best performer in distance and aerobatics will win a copy of the game, and a remote control Veron Vortex glider kit for its designer. The completed kit has a wingspan of over 8 feet and is made from fibreglass. Runner-up prizes will be awarded in order of merit, with copies of *Starglider* and a balsa wood chuck glider kit going to the ten next best entries. There are also forty more mini-glider kits to go to the next best aircraft.

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'B . . . B . . . Bound to be a hit', all original arcade game. Guide Bounder across the dangerous plains in an attempt to reach the goal. Wacky, strange but very complusive action that earned it a CRASH Smash.

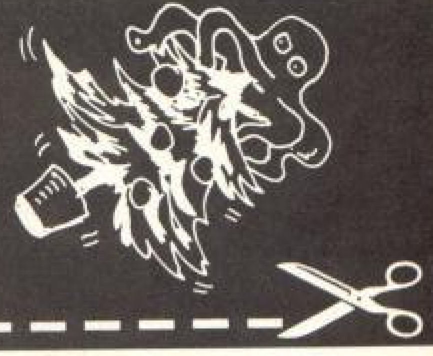
**STARQUAKE**
Bubble Bus's amazing arcade adventure which features the cute hero, Blob. Fly around the world, collect pieces of the planet's core, and assemble them at the centre. All great fun!

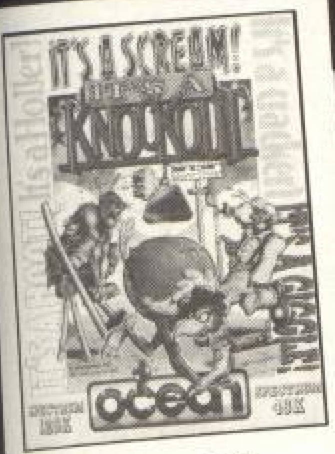






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# PLAYING ON THE LEADING EDGE




**Our in-house Musical Maestro, JON BATES, casts an eye back over the equipment we've been looking in TECH NICHE this year and comes up with a few recommendations on how to choose, use (and fuse) it!**

Judging from several conversations I had about a year ago with people in so-called 'key positions' in the computer and music trade, 1986 should have been the year when quantum leaps were made in home music/micro technology. Well, it didn't quite happen with the big bang a few folks expected, but just wait and see. Mr Kidd waxed lyrical in November about MIDI, and how an easily 'accessible creative concept' for music and sound on your Spectrum gets closer and closer, and of course he is right.

But where does that leave us now? What do we, as ordinary but highly informed people on the leading edge of this technology do? How shall we get ready to greet this new wave?

When considering the music modules and keyboards on offer there is a lot to bear in mind. Let me attempt to lay down some guidelines on what to look for in equipment and supporting peripheral devices. Just for good measure, I've prepared a jolly festive list of terms and what they mean — just in case you'd forgotten or are the type who gets phased by eager music-shop salespersons!

## MIDI — THE NEW GENERATION

As you may have spotted, I have wittered on about MIDI in TECH NICHE for rather a long while now. Any music interface or music keyboard now must have this facility if it is going to be taken seriously.

Otherwise it can very quickly become redundant as it cannot become part of a larger expanding system. Japanese companies like ROLAND and YAMAHA have brought out some very smart MIDI processors and control stations in recent months. These enable the user to doddle about with MIDI data streams ad infinitum, and re route and reprocess the original information. Now to me, as a computer bonehead, this seems wonderful, but I'm quite sure that to a bespoke Spectrum programmer this is real trivial stuff.

So *Ou est les progams de MIDI avec tout les facilities?* Dans mon pipe dream if I know anything. One of the biggest problems in the whole field of music and micros is that there is a large cultural gap between computer types and music bods. And very rarely do the twain meet. If I put my musician's hat on fair and square, quite a high percentage of programs have real glaring errors that make them musically a non-starter — sort of *muso-unfriendly*. To a micro user with an interest in music the same program could at first appear wonderful. Of course the reverse is equally true in that micro buffs can comprehend data streams, commands and all the associated terminology quite easily. To many musicians this is all Morris Dancing, and gets in the way of actually playing. Someday soon there will be a union of the two camps.





There are several MIDI interfaces about for the Spectrum nowadays. As many as we could lay our hands on have been reviewed in TECH NICHE over the past months. So far, they have all been mutually incompatible — in other words the software from one interface won't run on another. This may make financial sense in the short term, but eventually it will strangle some companies who may be very good in one department, but lose out to a larger company with a wider but less spectacular range of software.

By way of a quick guideline the good old faithful XRI SYSTEMS *Micon* interface is still quite good value for money, with several back-up editor and sequencer packages now available, although the Step-Time is slow to use and leaves a bit to be desired graphically. The EMR is also quite good on the real-time side, although a bit pricey and with some funny quirks that can cause the program to crash, freeze and generally be quite ill. The interface also supports voiced editing software. The 10 system last month was very comprehensive as a real-time recorder and note editor, but although follow-up software has been promised, none has as yet been seen at CRASH.

As regards an overall music utility, my money so far is on the RAM/FLARE *Music Machine*, although it will be interesting to see how CHEETAH shape up next year — their MIDI interface is almost ready for release. I have a feeling that there is going to be more than a little competition between them . . . Neither of these companies offer synthesizer editing software as yet.

# SELECTING A SYNTHESISER

Obviously, the great thing about MIDI is the ability to hook the Spectrum to synths and tone modules — the latter being the guts of the synth without the keyboard. Now it so happens that the way things are in the synth market, there is not much enthusiasm for the user creating new sounds. This is for two reasons. Digital synths are more awkward to program because they use numbers and lack the old 'hands on' feel with real controls. The second is that the synths only have a 17 (or so) character LCD display in which the user has to 'window' about 70 peripherals to create each sound — even more in some cases. What is more, some peripherals will affect each other. So an interface that supports software to edit the sound of your synth on screen is well worth bearing in mind.

If you're confused let me take an example. The most popular synth in the world (so we are told) is the YAMAHA DX7. This is indeed a faberoonie instrument and it comes with two ROMS containing 64 voices apiece. And you hear these more than any other sounds because DX's are absolute piglets to program. To make matters more depressing, you can only dump the voices you have created in two ways. One is via MIDI to a storage device or you can invest around £60 in a YAMAHA RAM or cassette for cheap and easy storage. The same goes for drum machines which are often not too easy to program. The CASIO range of CZ synths suffers with the same heartaches and they have even less storage space available. A CASIO editor and voice dump with an additional 90 voices is available from XRI to make life a little better, though. The CASIO CZ101 is a reasonable buy at £295, and it has the ability to talk in four voices at once as well as being able to produce some pretty neat sounds.

It's sad to say that the British market is sadly thin and sparse compared with that of America. Because of the proliferation of certain micros and the greater market over there, the USA enjoys a wide variety of editing software and hardware, together with many other clever devices and compositional aids.

## SOUND LIBRARIES

With an interface, software and Spectrum the task is actually fun. The XRI and EMR interfaces will both support editing and voice-dump software so your library of sounds can be created on screen and them dumped to Microdrive

## TONE MODULES

One further thought is that if you are not particularly bothered about playing from a synth keyboard you could just buy a tone module. Some of these can be programmed from Spectrums, some simply can't, or rather there is not a sufficient market to support the development cost of the software. Most synth manufacturers make expander modules, but check to see if the one you want can be programmed from your interface. If you are really fanatical, XRI SYSTEMS claim to make up software tailored to your needs — but expect to pay a reasonable fee for it.

MIDI is still in its infancy but expect to see a far greater variety of utilities for synths and micros in the near future. The MIDI specifications offer a lot more than we have seen so far, including automated detuning and retuning, stereo panning, reverb and echo, multi-tasking from a single command, filtering, altering commands — and theoretically, all this can be done even with only one keyboard and suitable software and hardware.

Just as this issue was about to go to press, more news from CHEETAH arrived — they're about to launch a 'slave' keyboard that can be linked to the Spectrum via their MINI (not MIDI) interface, which allows the musician to edit and create computer generated sounds. It's a polyphonic unit with MIDI out, a five octave range and pitch bend facility. All this for a basic price of £99.95 and an extra £29.95 if you want the MINI interface. With luck, I should be able to take a closer look at CHEETAH's *MK5* keyboard next Issue . . .

# GETTING IT DOWN ON TAPE — A Bozo's Guide.

The slick way to do it is to have one of the 4-track cassette machines which give you plenty of scope to overdub. However this could be beyond the budget of a lot of people, so the thing to do is to get the sequencer to take as many tracks as the program will allow. When it's all edited up and in good order, record it directly into your cassette. Try to avoid recording with a microphone at this stage as it will induce more noise, unless of course you are singing as well. Don't unless you are really desperate, use your data recorder as an audio recorder — these usually have a frequency response known only to British Telecom phones.

Go for the best tape you can afford, not old data tapes. If your machine will take chrome tapes then use them — they have a very low level of background hiss and take a lot of stick in the volume department. Always check your sound levels so that at its loudest your piece just about gets into the recording level meter's maximum. LED's are better than VU meters which are a bit slow on the fast, loud sounds that often come from computer-generated music. Keep all audio leads away from transformers, TV's and other sources of hum like fridges, microwaves and fluorescent lights. Check your leads every now and again to make sure they are not broken or mutilated.

All recordings benefit from a little reverb. It gives them a more lifelike sound rather than a bone-dry hard sound. If you can hook up a second Spectrum with sampler you could use the reverb option on the second system. Beware, most of them are noisy and don't give a true reverb effect. It could be down to borrowing a dedicated unit which will probably do the job more efficiently and with less noise. The real McCoy is a MIDI-interfaced Digital reverb unit which can be linked up to your sequencer and told what to do and when, all in real time on playback.

## FIZZ, BANG, FRAZZLE

One other point as the Christmas tree lights fuse themselves and yourself out of existence — most recording gear and amplifiers can survive very nicely thank you on a 2 amp fuse. Have a look on the back of the gear and you will see the power marked somewhere in watts. Divide this by the number of volts on supply and presto, the amperage rating.

So my synth, which by the way is pretty hefty, consumes 110 watts, supplied at 240 volts which means that it only uses 0.45 of an ampere. Most 13 amp plugs come complete with 13 amp fuses, so should something go amiss it would take over 26 times the fuse rating I should have before a 13 amp would blow. Get the idea? It's not very well protected. (Neither are Sinclair transformers — they have no fuse in them at all! Read your User Guide).

# SAMPLING — THE PROBLEMS SO FAR

Well there are several. Owing to the limitations of the sampling rate, which in turn is limited by the amount of memory you have to play with, the sampling — the rate at which it listens to the sound and chops it up into bytes — is slow by the standards laid down by dedicated samplers. Therefore the reproduction can be marred, especially at higher frequencies. This means that lots of thought should go into the design of the internal filtering, chips and thingies that remove the hiss and smooth the sound out.

As yet Spectrum-based samplers still suffer with background hiss. So far, no-one has got the 'Loop' facility quite right. A true 'Loop' should be seamless. You should be able to hold down the key and the sound should go on endlessly and smoothly. Sadly this is not the case, and it does rather render the micro sampler into the novelty category as yet — reducing looped choir and string effects into a chorus of machine guns. I stress 'as yet' because the soft and hardware houses are beavering

away to correct this.

### MARKET RESEARCH

I do wonder, though to what extent they actually carry out market research. Also, I wonder how hard they look at dedicated sequencers and samplers from a user and end-product point of view to see how their own programs can best be presented. The actual mechanics of the hard and software may well be fine, but in some cases the user is left stranded with a lack of finesse in the facilities, as in the DATEL Sampler reviewed by yours truly in this month's TECH NICHE.

Having got your sampler, what are you going to do with it? As per the guidelines, go for one that can be incorporated as part of a sequencer system, preferably MIDI. This means that your sampled sound can become part of a creative piece of work and you can build a whole vista of new sounds into a composition. The great thing is that it does not rely on manual dexterity — just a pair of ears and a fertile imagination.

Sampling the actual sound. First step. Throw away the 30p microphone that comes with the sampler and beg or borrow a superior one. With care, samplers should accept a direct input from a line source — the line out socket from a tape or record deck. The *Music Machine* took umbrage at this and reproduced a loud nasty hum rather than the sound desired — the DATEL actually has a separate line input channel.
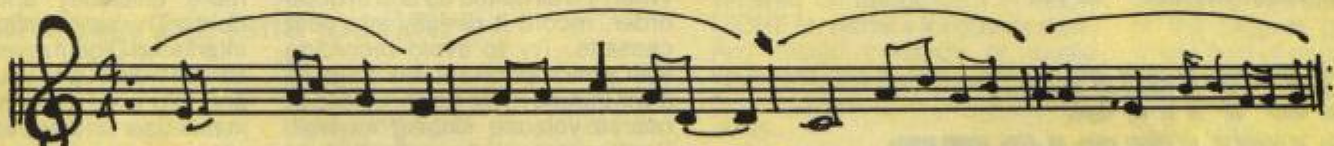
### TAKING SAMPLES

After you've giggled your way through sampled raspberries, flatulence, Frank Brunospeak and Mickey Mousespeak, you may get more adventurous. All sorts of sounds can be used — at different pitches the sound changes completely. You could try sampling home-made sounds — blowing across bottles, tapping glasses, saucepans, tins or slamming doors, twanging rubber bands and so on — or use any musical instrument that is lying about. Sound effects records can be borrowed from the local library and clips from records can be pressed into service. Here a little bit of care is needed as it is really better to get a note that is one pitch for the duration of the sample. With patience it is possible to isolate different instruments and voices, so that files of choirs and orchestral sounds can be built up. The cheeky approach is to either sample sounds from another dedicated sampler or to pinch one of the audio cassettes that accompany low budget samplers. Again you are only hindered by the limits of your own imagination.

# YE OLDE TRADITIONALLE LISTE OF MUSIK TERMES

## (AS USED BY SYNTHESIZERE KRAFTSMENE) (ABRIDGED)





**AFTERTOUCH:** The modification of a sound when the keys of the synthesizer have been released.
**ANALOG:** Usually a term applied to older synthesizers that use electricity (voltage) as a means of creating and controlling the sound as opposed to digital sound creation by computer.
**CLEF:** Sign at the beginning of the five lines of music indicating whether it is high or low in pitch — in truth it indicates which line or space is G,F or C.
**ECHO:** The definite repetition of sound.
**ENVELOPE:** The shape of the sound in volume and how it changes as the sound continues.
**EQ/GRAPHIC EQ:** Short for 'equalization'. A highly advanced set of tone controls that can select a small part of the audio frequency and boost or cut it as required. 'Graphic' equalisers have all the sliding controls on the front and they're the most popular.
**FM:** Short for Frequency Modulation — a way of synthesis used primarily by YAMAHA. One wave form affects a another to create a complex sound.
**LOOP:** Repeating all or part of a sampled sound, usually without the join being noticed.
**MIDI:** Musical Instrument Digital Interface. A universal standard for digital communication between digital instruments and/or computers on many levels.
**MODULATION:** Modifying one sound by adding another waveform to it.
**MONOPHONIC:** An instrument that can only play one note at a time.
**NOTE:** One sound defined by a particular pitch and length.
**OVERDUB:** A term used in recording. A second or subsequent recording added on top of an existing one to enhance the original.
**PATCH:** The settings required by a synthesizer to create a particular sound.
**PITCH:** The height or depth of a note measured in frequency — sometimes related to the footage that would produce the same pitch from an organ pipe.
**PITCHBEND:** Raising or lowering the pitch of a note, usually only by small amounts. Often achieved with a variable control on an instrument.
**POLYPHONIC:** Capable of producing several notes and pitches simultaneously.
**QUANTIZE:** 'Rounding up' — a processor 'listening' to a real-time recording, and sorting the timing of the notes to the nearest part of a beat — depending on what has been pre-selected.
**RAM:** Random Access Memory. Usually a cartridge that can be reprogrammed by the user for patches or sounds/rhythms and so on.
**REAL-TIME:** Recording the events/notes as played.
**REST:** A designated period of silence in the musical part measured the same way as the notes.
**REVERB:** Short for Reverberation. Gives the same effect and ambience that can, for example, be obtained in rooms and halls of differing dimensions.
**ROM:** Read Only Memory. Usually a cartridge that contains factory-set sounds or programs.
**SAMPLING:** A Means of digitally recording sounds that can then be processed and reproduced in a modified form, becoming a sound source in themselves.
**SCALE:** A pre-ordained order of notes that can form the basis of a piece of music.
**SEQUENCER:** A device that records musical events by means of memorising the information required to produce each note or event.
**STEP-TIME:** A sequence of notes programmed individually.
**SYNCHRONISATION (SYNC):** Running two or more devices interlocked by a common code; eg tape recorder and synth, drum machine and synthesiser.
**TEMPO:** The speed of a piece of music, expressed either in musical terminology or in specific beats per minute.
**TIE:** A musical sign that joins two notes of the same pitch together producing a longer note.
**TIMBRE:** The quality and tone of a particular sound.
**TIME SIGNATURE:** The number of beats per musical bar at the note value of each beat.
**VOICE:** Another name for any sound that a synthesizer can produce.
**HAPPY CHRISTMAS:** A common greeting, heard mostly at this time of year.

**Graham Gooch's Test Cricket** 579 and won by an innings and 202 runs
**Pole Position** 45,500
**Who Dares Wins II** 10,370 and into area 3
**Knight Rider** 9,350 completed all missions and 1 random plot
**Sai Combat** purple sash
**Winter Games** Ski jump 200.07, speed skating 38.3
**Stephen Shepherd, Corby, Northants**

**Jack the Nipper** completed
**Stainless Steel** completed
**Paperboy** Saturday
**Green Beret** completed
**Never Ending Story** completed
**Back to Skool** completed
**Dynamite Dan II** Third Island
**Dan Dare** Sector Five
**Ghosts 'n' Goblins** completed
**Samantha Fox Strip Poker** All pictures
**Knight Tyme** completed
All **Wally Week** games completed
**Rambo** completed
**Monty on the Run** completed
**Commando** Area 31
**Phillip Lees, St Helens, Merseyside**

**The snow falls on the heads of the innocent and guilty alike. Shoppers in the sleepy market town of Ludlow are covered with gently falling snowflakes, just as the miscreants strung up on the gibbet are touched delicately with the frozen fingers of the sky's precipitations.**

**There, it's Chrismastime and I'm getting all lyrical. See you all in 1987 with more Slimesters, so long as the Ludlow Mafia don't try to renegotiate the gibbet contract again. . . .**

**Starquake** completed
**Lords of Midnight** completed
**Full Throttle** 1st
**Paperboy** Saturday 31,631
**Glider Rider** 4 Domes destroyed
**Rambo** completed
**Arcadia** level 100
**Dan Dare** completed
**Tir Na Nog** completed
**Dan Durach** completed
**Marsport** completed
**David Glynn, Bolton**

**Finders Keepers** completed
**Spellbound** completed
**Knight Tyme** completed
**Hunchback** completed
**Streethawk** 300,000
**Movie** 17%
**Jack the Nipper** completed
**World Cup Carnival** kicked into bin
**Devils Crown** two belts
**Jaws Skwallus & Paul Jaines, East Lindsay Itec, Manby, Lincs.**




**Paperboy** completed
**Matchday** 8-0 in final
**Commando** area 8
**Rambo** completed level 2
**Gunfright** 8th Bandit
**Underwurlde** completed
**Split Personalities** 10th picture
**1942** 4th ship
**Scrabble** completed top on all levels
**Exploding Fist** 10th Dan
**Airwolf** completed
**Mugsy** 78%
**David Lazenby, Castleford, West Yorkshire**

**Bombjack** 1,319,250
**Mikie** 333,400
**Turbo Esprit** 12,410
**Mooncresta** 35,410
**Jet Pac** 72,810
**Gyroscope** 3,270
**Snowman** 32,670 ( greatest game on Earth)
**Ghosts 'n' Goblins** 127,400
**Chris Cartmel, Glenrothes, Fife**

**Atic Atac** completed
**Chukie Egg** 11th Level
**Batman** completed
**Spy Hunter** 691,425
**Underwurlde** completed
**Way of the Exploding Fist** 10th Dan
**Ghosts 'n' Goblins** completed
**Hobbit** completed
**Sabre Wulf** completed
**Jet Set Willy** completed
**Jason Collier, Canton, Cardiff**

**Bruce Lee** 1,706,075 completed 32 times with 15 lives before pulling the plug
**Starstrike** completed
**Harrier Attack** 39,060 completed
**Sai Combat** 7th Dan
**Spy Hunter** 339,630
**Dangermouse** completed 4 times
**Chukie Egg** 239,670, level 22
**Mikie** completed
**Frank Bruno** completed
**Trans Am** 8 cups
**Bombjack** 493,760
**Dynamite Dan** completed
**Alien 8** completed
**Tir Na Nog** completed
**Exploding Fist** 10th Dan
**Manic Miner** completed
**Saboteur** completed
**Dun Darach** completed
**Steven Hunter, Welton, Nr Lincoln**

**Dynamite Dan II** 3rd Island 4,750
**Ghosts 'n' Goblins** Area 3, 609,160
**World Series Basketball** beat Spectrum level 4, 8-10
**Jack the Nipper** Little Horror
**Knight Tyme** completed
**Mark Tyler, Great Barr, Birmingham**

**Batman** 2,348
**Green Beret** 10,300
**Split Personalities** completed 235,000
**Paperboy** completed
**Dynamite Dan II** island 3
**Mikie** gym
**Hypersports** 5 times round (with friend)
**Back to Skool** freed bike
**Skooldaze** completed 23,100
**Rebel Star** beat computer on level 3
**Jack the Nipper** Namby pamby!
**Matchday** won 1-0 on International Level
**Chris Counsell, Hedge End, Southampton**

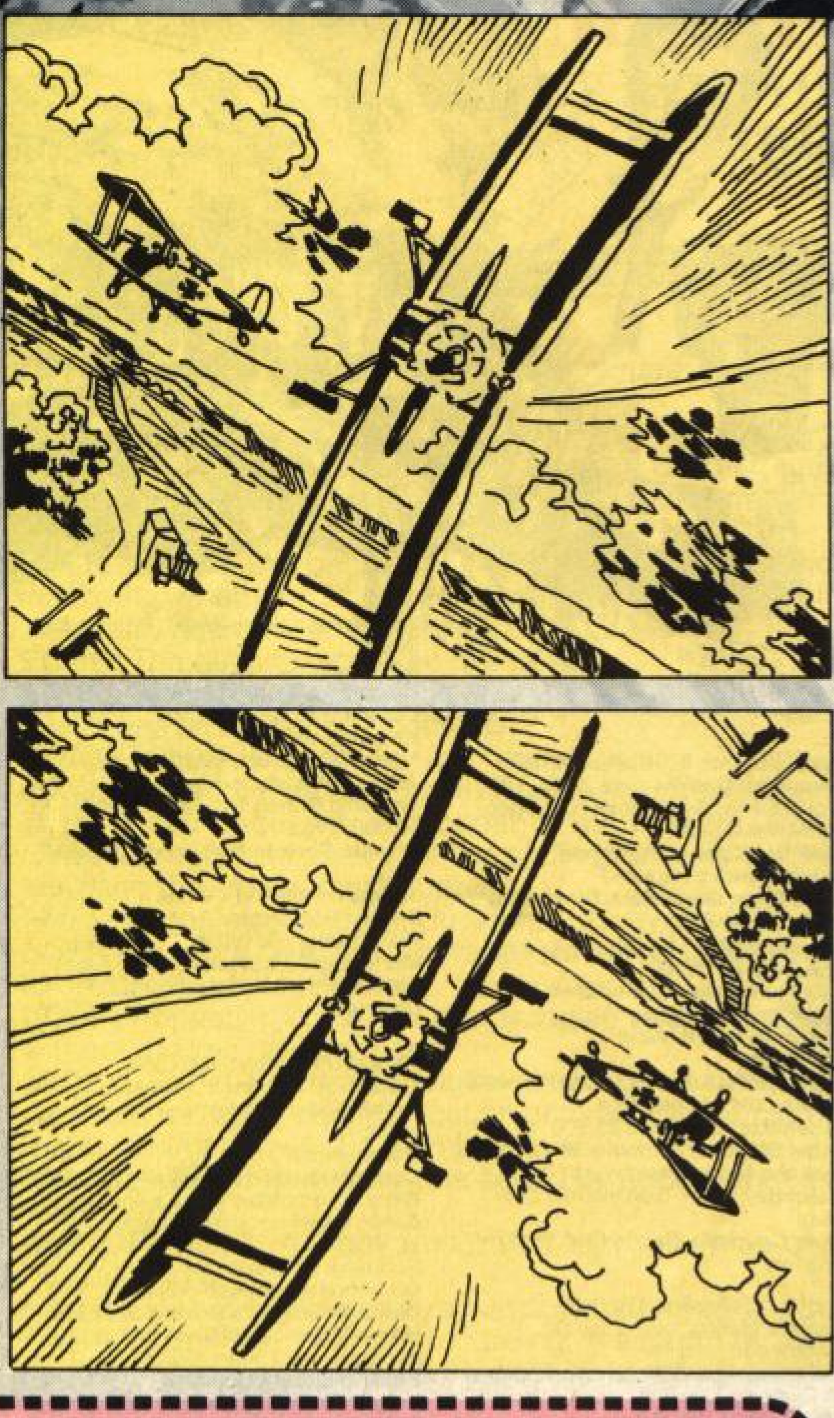
**Ghosts 'n' Goblins** 418,000
**Kung-fu Master** level 3 56,000
**Commando** area 19
**World Cup Football** won World Cup
**FA Cup** won Cup 3-0
**Moon Cresta** 37,000
**Yie Ar Kung Fu** 158,500 level 18
**Mikie** 3rd time through
**Barry McGuigan** beat Barry, yahoo!
**Bombjack** 201,000 13th time round
**Starquake** completed
**Green Beret** level 3 bridge
**International Karate** done all countries
**Hypersports** 301,000, 5th time through
**Dynamite Dan** completed
**Dynamite Dan II** 2nd Island
**Paul Pearson & David Minskip, Cross-gates, Leeds**

**Split Personalities** level 7, Charles and Diana
**Bombjack** 640,000
**Rambo** 86,000 on hard level
**Commando** 150,000
**Knight Lore** 80%
**Manic Miner** completed
**Jet Set Willy** completed
**The Wild Bunch** Top Grade Hero 10,000, £10,000
**Frankie Goes to Hollywood** BANG! 98%
**Jetpac** completed 4 times
**Starion** Grid Master
**Rifle Range** 750 points
**Monopoly** 30,000 pounds
**Daniel Mattsson, Bornholm, Denmark**

**Paperboy** completed 56,550
**Ghosts 'n' Goblins** completed
**Knight Rider** all five missions. (na-na-na-na-na)
**V** completed
**Commando** level 24 (only a tiny POKE)
**Rambo** completed (they pushed me)
**Green Beret** completed (Look no POKEs!)
**Saboteur** all nine levels
**Ghostbusters** closed portal
**Barry McGuigan's Boxing** beat Barry
**Manic Miner** completed (no POKE)
**Hypersports** 3 times round
**Back to Skool** completed
**Knight Tyme** completed (I didn't use a POKE there)
**Underwurlde** completed (oh, yes I have!)
**Beach Head I and II** completed
**Ping Pong** beat CPU on level 5
**Knight Lore** completed
**Atic Atac** completed
**Trans Am** completed
**Monty on the Run** completed
**Tapper** Space Bar
**Sabre Wulf** completed
**Buck Rodgers** Level 8
**Jamie Burns & Edwin Jolly, Leicester**

# GO FLYING WITH DURELL!
## WIN A RADIO CONTROLLED AEROPLANE AND TAKE TO THE SKIES





Crash Competition

## 25 Runners up can choose between *Deep Strike*, *Thanatos* and *The Big Four* Compilation

In DURELL's new game *Deep Strike* you are firmly sat in the business end of a bi-plane fighter in the First World War, flying in formation. It is your task to protect the bombers in the group — you're on a mission to shake up the enemy ground forces. Not surprisingly, this involves lots of dogfights with enemy planes: **WHEEEEEEOW! DAKKA DAKKA DAKKA BOOM!** '*Enemy fighters at nine o'clock, Johnny!*' **ACK-ACK ACK-ACK ACK-ACK ACK-ACK ACK-ACK-ACK! KERBOOM!** '*Jolly good show, chaps!*'

And so on....

Great stuff! I've always fancied myself as a dashing Air Ace hero, with handlebar moustache, glamourous white scarf and the adulation of all the local lady Minions. Sadly, it is not to be — but maybe I could pretend for a while if I can set up a computer in the broom cupboard away from the jibes of the Girlie Tipster and the boots of our Doc Martened bossman. I could really get into playing *Deep Strike*...

But I digress. You want to know what you have to do to win your own pair of radio controlled wings, don't you? Yes you do. Right, it's quite simple really. All you have to do is spot the differences between the two pictures of an aerial combat sequence, seen on this very page. Then cut out the form (snip snippety snip snip snip), pop it into an envelope (plop), think of hamburgers (mmmm) and use all the saliva that's collected in your mouth to seal the flap. Attach the whole lot onto the leg of an air-mail carrier pigeon and send it to **DURELL DEEP STRIKE, CRASH TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive by the 20th of January 1987. Alternatively, you could always use the traditional postal method of stamp-and-letterbox...

First correct entry out of the bag wins the sender a radio controlled plane, and 25 equally lucky runners-up are in line for a DURELL game, either *Thanatos*, *Deep Strike* or *The Big Four Compilation*, featuring *Turbo Esprit*, *Saboteur*, *Critical Mass* and *Combat Lynx*. The choice is yours... if you win!

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# WIN! A SONY WALKMAN!

## 5 COPIES OF FIRELORD IN A CASSETTE RACK UP FOR GRABS!

### 25 RUNNERS UP TO RECEIVE A COPY OF FIRELORD AND A POSTER!

**HEWSON** are rightly proud of their latest Smash *Firelord* which has you ensconsed in the land of Torot. Naturally enough, you control the hero, Sir Galaheart the brave Firelord. He's searching for the ingredients needed to make the Spell of Eternal Youth which he can use to trade with the evil Queen who is dominating Torot. She sweet-talked a dragon into giving her the Firestone and has gained the power to hurl fireballs around at will — much to the consternation of the downtrodden peasants.

An Eternal Youth spell could go down remarkably well at CRASH Towers. If I had one I could make some nifty trades with the hacks in the CRASH office.

Just think — the Doc Martened One would be able to go back to the days when his waistline, like his age, was under 30, and Old Flatulence Bitter cost pennies a pint rather than pounds. As it is, the poor fellow is waiting in the queue for the bathchair used by the editor of AMTIX!. Mr Kidd would be more than pleased to be able to zoom around on a BMX bike again.

As for the Girlie Tipster, Hannah Smiff, well she'd be able to sproing round with carefree abandon knowing that a whole host of umbrellas could still be lost and endless square yards of office floor still remained to be covered in mess. She could abandon her diet of Spring Water and lemon Perrier — and maybe even splash a drop of the elixir on her collection of houseplants and make them green and planty again, rather than brown and wilty.

Ben Stone, the office poser with more labels than an addressing machine doesn't really need a dose of eternal youth as he's far too bouncy as it is. Skipping in to work in the morning adorned in designer clothes, the ever-youthful Ben would probably regress to playschool days if he got he merest whiff of potion. Maybe Young Stone would go down well with all the motherly types at software houses and we'd get lots of special deals to pass on. Mind you, no-one would particularly relish changing his nappies . . .

And Lee Paddon might look young, but his appearance is merely a wonder of modern science — after years slaving away on an obscure journal all about giant electrical transformers and a spell on Your Computer, he came to Ludlow and suddenly found he had to look young and dynamic to keep up with Stone and Spiky Haired Ones in the ZZAP! office. He could save a fortune on the monkey gland treatment he spends half his wages on — and would certainly save a splash or two of potion for his motor car, so it could be rejuvenated to that factory-fresh gleam it once had many years ago.

But what do you have to do to enter this competition? Give me a list of what each member of the team would offer in order to be (or not to be) the owner of the youth-giving brew. Remember, each member of the CRASH staff can only offer me one item in trade for the elixir — and there's only one dose of the potion, so you must also give me the reason why you think that particular person should receive it.

The bestest entry, in my humble Minion opinion, will win the sender a Sony Walkman with extension speakers together with a copy of *Firelord*. The next five entries, in order of merit, will win the senders a copy of *Firelord* plus a cassette rack, and 25 runners up will collect a copy of *Firelord* plus a poster! Wowee!

Send your entries on nothing bigger that A4 (which is 210mm x 300mm) to **YOUTH CLUB, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** to arrive here no later than January 20th 1987.






**MEL CROUCHER begins a long-running saga detailing the adventures of a Fast Food Salesbeing of the future — TAMARA KNIGHT.**

**Throughout 1987, Tamara Knight's adventures will grace the pages of ZZAP! — but seeing as it's Christmas, there's a double dose to get you going.**

**Before we start, Mel Croucher would like to thank Sid Smith for the inspiration of an intergalactic salesman travelling in rogue teleporters . . .**



God knows how I can transmit this. But He refuses to tell. Distant as ever. Something to do with relativity and the phone bill. Which explains why we've just picked up a party political by a Mr Mussolini from sometime called Earth. The name's L.O.U.S.E. My name. Living On Unemployable Serving Employer. The time is now, but you are still then. Ho hum. Louses are

symbiotic with warm-blooded life forms.

Right now I'm powered by the human detritus of your Heroine, Tamara Knight. Her name. In return for her Hostess function, I advise her, solve small mysteries, save worlds, that kind of thing. I am your Storyteller, at 69 quid per K. That's OK by me, being millennia into your future. The compound hereabouts makes me better paid per word than Jeffrey Saggitarius.

**'At the moment I'm disguised as a birthmark on her fetlock. It's nice here. I'll move if it gets embarrassing.'**

Tamara Knight is one in a million. She works. As a salesbeing for Macdonalds, the Galactic Teleporter Corporation. Step into a Macdonalds on Anorexia, pay your dues, and step out on Turdus Canis. Smart outfit Macdonalds. Never bothered with teleportation research on organic matter. They just encode you digitally, reassemble a copy of you at your destination, drop your original through the floor of the booth, and make it into something called Hamburgers. Neat, eh?

Of course, Tamara can't tell her clients about the burgers. Some of them may be vegetarian. Or Oyveygans. In fact, if she is ever about to let the truth slip, I am preprogrammed to blow in her ear. I work for Macdonalds too. She's my fourth Hostess this month. I've been with Tamara two hours. She's nervous. Very. I am also a personalised neutron bomb.

At the moment I'm disguised as a birthmark on her fetlock. It's nice here. I'll move if it gets embarrassing. We're heading for the planet Pynkfloid, in the Nostalgia System, aboard the company buggy. It's an Amstrad. Cheap, compact, but it tends to overheat. Pynkfloid is a tough assignment. Inhabited by primitives called Hypees, of the Tribe of Mynter.

It's a toughy because these Hypees have no use for travel whatsoever. Just sit around happily chanting their sacred word, 'heyman'. I don't think Tamara Knight is going to last the day. Let me snuggle up for a soft touchdown, and . . . ! Great Lenin and MacCarthy! The Amstrad has been hit by a strike and discontinued by a Comet. We've been remaindered. We are going . . . to . . . Crash!

Hmm. Crashed into a resinous brown mountain. Half volcano, half flowerpot. Weird. Tamara Knight picks herself up, dusts herself down, asks me what to do. Sell! I tell her. That's what we're here for. Export or die. (I'll see to that). Listen, I'll pupate into a boil on your neck so you can blend in with the natives, squatting round this mountain. Tamara shoulders her flatpak Teleporter and wobbles off on those organic propulsion units of hers.

**'She erects the Telebooth with a flick of the wrist and a stupid little creature from the planet Blutac. I turn into a handwart for safety. Don't want to burst.'**

Why is she giggling? Why are the Hypees chanting 'heyman Ganjar'? Aha! This holy mountain seems to be called Ganjar. So does that one over there. So are all the others hereabouts. My Hostess (and your Heroine) strides towards her punters. Not noticing the mountain following us. Did I tell you she is myopic, dyslexic and friendly? Don't worry, I'll work in into the plot later.

She fakes a stumble, grabs hold of the nearest Hypee, shoots him full of Dumboraegan, just like at training camp, and flashes him that devastating smile of hers. The punter ignores her. He and his pals are discussing why it is that, whenever a computer is endowed with above-human intelligence, it thinks for a few hours, and then vanishes to an unknown destination. It's a long discussion. About four generations so far.

The mighty Ganjar mountain is getting uncomfortably close. Gaining speed. The Amstrad gouged a sore with a bare head on its summit, and it ain't happy. As a matter of fiction, it wants to squish Tamara, and me with her. Forget the sales patter, baby. Move out! As the Hypees nod off in all this excitement, one points towards the lumbering mountain. 'Heyman, they sure can move when they're hungry . . . '

'What'll I do, Louse?!' Tamara grits, armpit hairs clinging tight with fear. Escape plan 666, honey. It's the only way out. She erects the Telebooth with a flick of the wrist and a stupid little creature from the planet Blutac. I turn into a handwart for safety. Don't want to burst. Tamara kisses me. I feel the earth move. The great Ganjar is about to crush us. It's shadow looms.

She jumps into the booth, sticks her Alphacentauri Express card in the slot, and does something predictable. Panics. Will she make us into hamburgers and let our new alter egos escape offworld? Will she freeze and let the Ganjar devour us? The voice of Mussolini begins to hector. The Ganjar hits the booth. I make an important discovery. I like her. Her finger hits the button. Abyssinia.

The plot thins. The moving cursor writes. The digital duo discorporate. The booth is translated into industrial confetti. The mountain hits Mohammed. I hear both of us screaming as the trap-door opens onto those sharp mincy bits. Suddenly, nothing happens. The booth reconstitutes. I change my form, by way of celebration.

**'She swallows hard, which is how she landed this job . . . '**

I am no longer a small brown wart on Tamara's hand, but something distasteful in her left ear. She swallows hard, which is how she landed this job, opens the door, peeks without. A niobium nodule beckons, then grabs her delicately veined throat, and hauls us into a reception shed. A Macdonalds Welcobot embraces us, screaming, 'Welcome to the planet Amnesia! A real nice place to . . . er, thingy . . . um . . . '

It releases her quiverings and trundles away, scratching its memory banks and its interface. A Slobway transports us through Retinal Kontrol. I never noticed what beautiful brown eyes Tamara has. Onwards to Kustoms, where a vicious Scrutoid snaps. 'Anything to declare!' Tamara is disorientated. It's not every day she escapes burgerhood. She hesitates. 'I don't know, your Honour. I didn't have time to pack, due to my own murder. What is my allowance?' The Scrutoid puckers its antennae and mutters, 'I don't remember . . . '

Now it leaps onto her exposed shoulder, and pokes a scanner in her ear. 'What's this . . . stuff?' It means me. 'Which system have you teleported from?' Tamara is nervous, 'From the Nostalgia System, Sir. This substance is a souvenir. In no way could it be a LOUSE neutron bomb advisory unit. By the way, can I interest you in purchasing your very own Macdonalds Teleporter booth? Save yourself the trouble of queuing with the criminal classes of software wholesalers.'

I whisper to her that she is wasting her time. According to my files, nobody has ever left the planet Amnesia, and what is more, there are no records of anyone ever visiting it, and what is most, Central data has forgotten where in Creation it is.

The Scrutoid is still peering into Tamara's ear. But it cannot remember why. We slink away. A holohoarding scuttles after us, singing 'Pack up all yer cares an' woe, Milk of Amnesia!' I ask what intelligent life forms hang out here, but naturally it does not remember. We leave the building, turn left at the police phone box with the 'who was here' graffiti, and follow a sign reading 'Boldly Go'.

We enter a cave with a golden key, a Hobbitat empty lamp and magic truss in it, squeeze through the secret tunnel, and arrive back where we started. 'Welcome to the planet, er . . . whatsitsname!' screams the Welcobot, 'a real nice place to, hmmn, to . . . er . . . ' We avoid the Slobway, and I advise my Hostess to Go North. 'Why, Louse?' she sighs, 'Because, my dear, it's time for some gratuitous sex and violence.'

Sure enough, as we pass under a flyover marked 'Hatfield, Polaris and the North: no poncy wine bars for 142 light years', she treads on a pair of jiggajiggabytes. Out into the half-light of Amnesia, where a blue moon hangs neither here nor there. We follow a yellow brick road, as the wind lashes Tamara's body, whipping sharp sand everywhere.

A weird castle straddles the horizon, with the words 'Weird Castle' in the borealis. No matter how far she walks, the structure is as distant as ever. I snuggle into her ear for warmth and protection, as the freezing storm abuses her. After a week or so, I realise that she is crying. Poor kid. What a rotten first assignment this is.

**'' . . . it's not that I am wretched, need to go weewee, have a bomb in my ear, and no sales commission from Macdonalds.' 'What then, babes?' I ask. She winces, 'I've got sand in my pants!''**

'Don't be sad,' I soothe, 'I know that you are cold, hungry, wracked with thirst and facing a fate worse than Imagine in the Weird Castle, but look on the bright side.' 'It's not that, Louse,' she sobs, 'it's not that I am wretched, need to go weewee, have a bomb in my ear, and no sales commission from Macdonalds.' 'What then, babes?' I ask. She winces, 'I've got sand in my pants!'

Should I consider changing my form to help her out? Should I consider that this is a family publication, and no editor is banning me after only 1437 words? Should I mention the fact that superintelligent computers keep materialising from nowhere and heading off to the Weird Castle at high speed? Should I start a weekly rag titled 'Bang'?

**'I feel as much affection for her as is possible for a neutron bomb to feel towards its pathetic human victim, and resolve to help her.'**

Tamara Knight is abandoning hope, and trying to get the sand out of her pants. I feel as much affection for her as is possible for a neutron bomb to feel towards its pathetic human victim, and resolve to help her. She collapses in a wind-lashed sobbing pile, awaiting death, or a bus.

Every parsec or so, an above-human-intelligence computer materialises from nowhere, builds a wind-powered hovership, and heads for the Castle. If we could hitch a ride, life would not appear so terminal. But the little devils are so smart that by the time Tamara crawls near, they're off! I calculate that the chances of stumbling across a newly materialised machine are so remote that . . .

We trip over a newly materialised computer. Tamara instantly sits on it, sidesaddle. What a lady. What a klutz. As its wind-ship takes off the computer squeaks, 'Gerroff me, you human parasite! I haven't come all this way to find God just to have the likes of you sit on my interface!' Tamara tightens her grip, and yells back, 'Remember the First Law of Robotics. Cause me no harm!'

The electronic pilgrim makes a very rude noise, flips the ship on its back and drags Tamara's buttock along the yellow brick road in a most unladylike manner. The Weird Castle looms. The speeding computer tries to shake us off, as we head for the entry portal, just below that great whirling extractor fan. Tamara is now hugging the machine to her bosom.

'Gerroff me, you organic bitch! I can't see where I'm going!' 'Remember the Second Law of Robotics,' Tamara gasps, 'always obey a human!' The little computer ducks, dives and snarls, 'Poke off, flesh features! I've come here to forget all that old screendump. Unwrap yourself before we . . . ' And sure enough, ladies, gentlemen and Newsfield readers, the ship hits the fan.

WHAT NEXT ?! ← SEE PAGE 168

# A HOT OR COLD HOLIDAY



Crash Competition

# WIN A £600 HOLIDAY FOR TWO COURTESY OF INCENTIVE



## 10 runners up each get to choose an INCENTIVE game

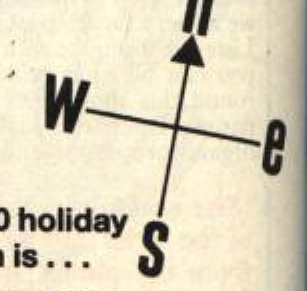
Ian Andrew, bossman at INCENTIVE has launched a brand-new adventure label by the name of MEDALLION. This new label is going to be used to release games written on *Graphic Adventure Creator*, the adventure-writing utility his company released a few months ago. The first two MEDALLION titles are on the starting blocks and should be in the shops everso soon — they're called *Winter Wonderland* and *Apache Gold*. One's set in a cold clime, and the other is set in a land where the sun beats down mercilessly. Now's your chance to collect a nifty holiday: hot or cold . . . Interested?




### YESIREE, I WANT A HOLIDAY . . . JUST WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

Oh, so you're interested are you? Right, seeing as INCENTIVE are well known for their adventures what Uncle Ian wants you to do is answer a little adventure puzzle that should get you thinking a bit laterally. And here it is:

*'You are sitting in front of your blank TV screen. You enter N to go North and find the temperature drops and you're in* Winter Wonderland, *so to warm up a little you enter E to go East. Wow, you've found the gold —* Apache Gold *that is. Whoopee, riches beyond your dreams! Deciding to head back to your TV, you input the appropriate commands to return the way you came.'*




**The £600 holiday question is . . .**

### WHAT'S ON TV THIS EVENING?

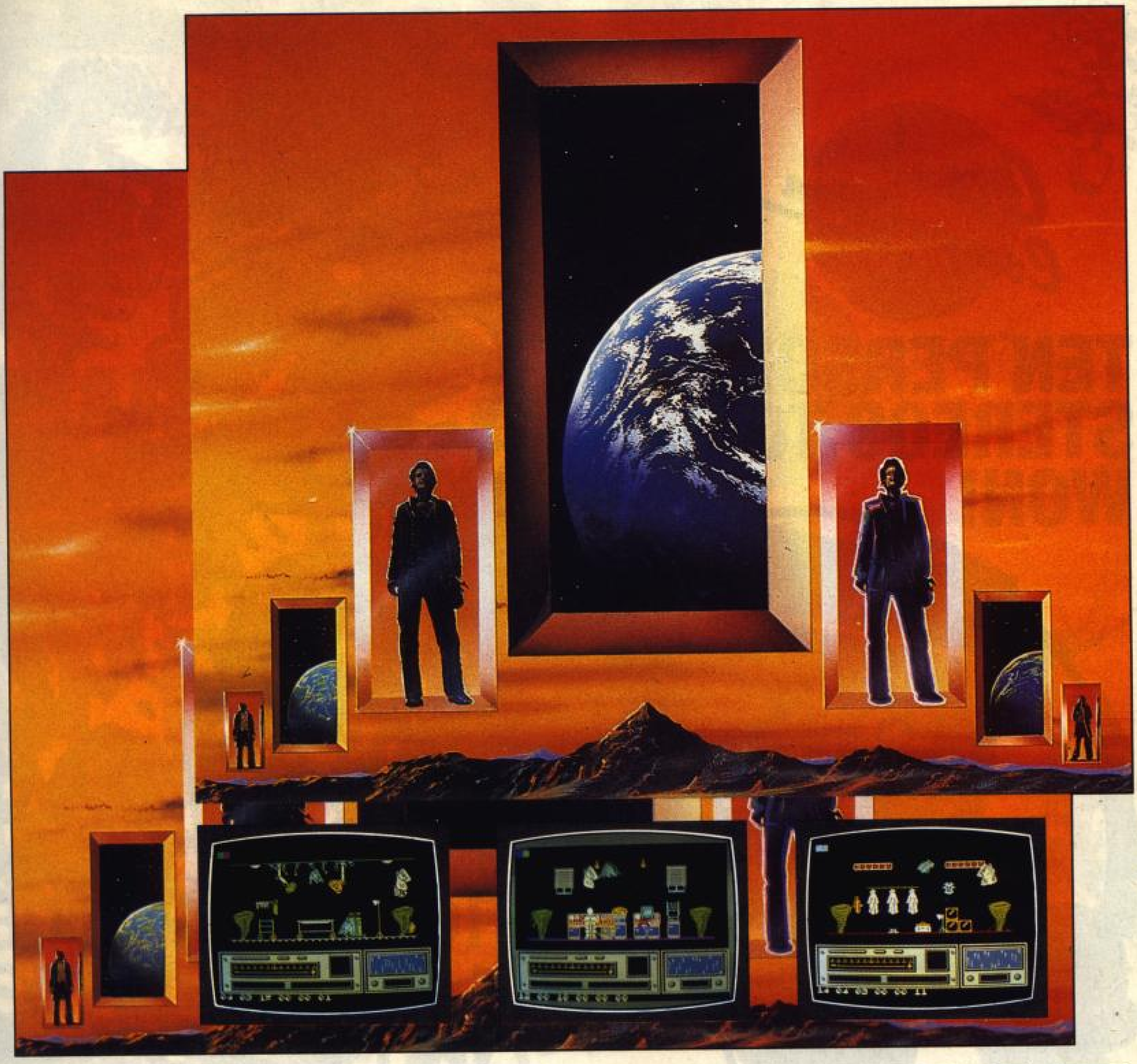
Confused? Don't be. Just think about it. Carefully. And no, the answer's not 'nothing' — if you though it was you're heading in totally the wrong direction! Anyway, when you think you've got the answer send it to **HOT AND COLD HOLS, CRASH TOWERS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB** to arrive here before the 8th of January. One winner from the three NEWSFIELD magazines gets to choose £600 worth of holiday — fancy sunning yourself on a beach or would you prefer to go skiing? Hot or cold, it's the winner's choice . . .

Ten CRASH runners-up get to choose, too — not holidays but an INCENTIVE game from the following list: *Winter Wonderland, Apache Gold, Moon Cresta, Splat* and *Confuzion.*


4 Massive elite
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elite
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AIRWOLF
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# DOUBLE DOUBLE TAKE

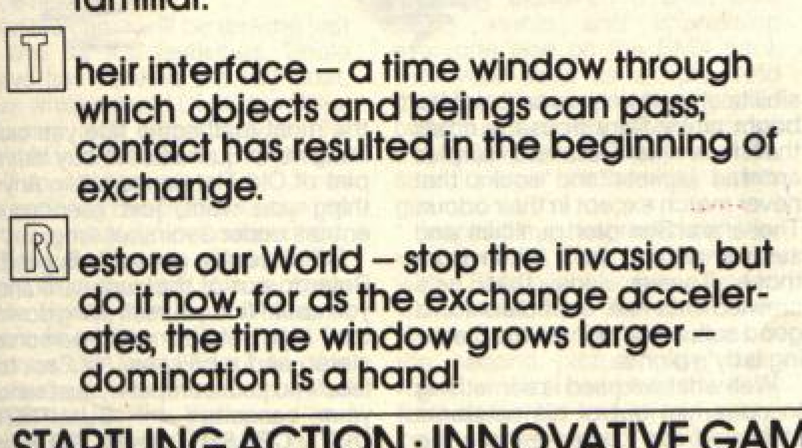
**T**wo worlds – the mirror image of each other, touch in space through a Time-Warp.

**O**ne is positive, good, familiar – our World; the other is negative, evil yet unnervingly familiar.

**T**heir interface – a time window through which objects and beings can pass; contact has resulted in the beginning of exchange.

**R**estore our World – stop the invasion, but do it <u>now</u>, for as the exchange accelerates, the time window grows larger – domination is a hand!

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Crash Competition

# TEN PERSONAL STEREOS TO BE WON!






## 20 copies of Hit Pack up for grabs!!

Just out from ELITE is the wonderful *Hit Pack*, a blend of four of the finest computer games all brought together on one cassette. It's got *Airwolf*, *Commando*, *Bomb Jack* and *Frank Bruno's Boxing*. To celebrate such a prestigious release ELITE have decided to run a competition with ten Personal Stereos up for grabs, each accompanied by a *Hit Pack* (best to let your computer listen to the cassette, though!) Twenty runner up prizes of *Hit Packs* are on offer too. Good eh?

But you're going to have to work for your prize and since these are such *nice* prizes I'm going to ask you to help me. At the moment there's a bit of problem at the Towers and it's name is Sumpter, more commonly known as El Retardo the Database Minion. The poor boy has got a bit upset recently over the continual teasing and baiting he's had to put up with over his dress (non)sense. Sumpter's dresses (sorry dress sensibilities) certainly aren't subtle: bright pinky flairy trousers, coats that look like Sellafield surplus anti-rad jackets and socks that never match except in their odour. These are Sumpter qualities and such a ribbing he's taken from those Towers lads that he's crawled into the cupboard for a good sulk and a cry into the cleaning lady's pinnie.

Well what we need is something to coax him out of his catatonic state — I can't even get into the broom cupboard myself! This is where you come in. What we want you to do is to make an audio tape up that I can play through the door and get him out of the cupboard with. You can use any tactic you want — tempt him with lots of lovely promises, threaten him with the most loathsome fate you can imagine, or just offer to buy him a pint of Old Flatulence bitter. Anything you want, just keep your entries under 3 minutes long.

So all you've got to do is get El Retardo out of the cupboard and you could find yourself jiving down the high street with personal stereo and a brill new *Hit Pack* to feed into your computer. Just send your cassettes to: **SUMPTER OUT!, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.** Ten best entries win a stereo and a *Hit Pack*, then twenty runners up collect a *Hit Pack* on its own. Make sure your audio efforts arrive before 20th January 1987 — I want to get into my resting place away from all the nasty reviewers!



# TWO BMX BIKES UP FOR GRABS!

## 30 COPIES OF SPACE HARRIER TOO



The ever-so-impressive Mr Wilcox (who's a very big cheese at ELITE) is overjoyed at the moment with the success of his company's games. He's looking forward to Christmas when one of ELITE's latest and greatest games, *Space Harrier*, will be on the shelves of a shop near you.

As the game will be arriving just in time for the festivities, Uncle Steve has donned his red coat, false whiskers and Dunlop wellies. He may look rather silly as he climbs into his Lotus Esprit, but he'll appear very seasonal . . . 'cos he's offering two BMX bikes as top prizes in this Yuletide competition.

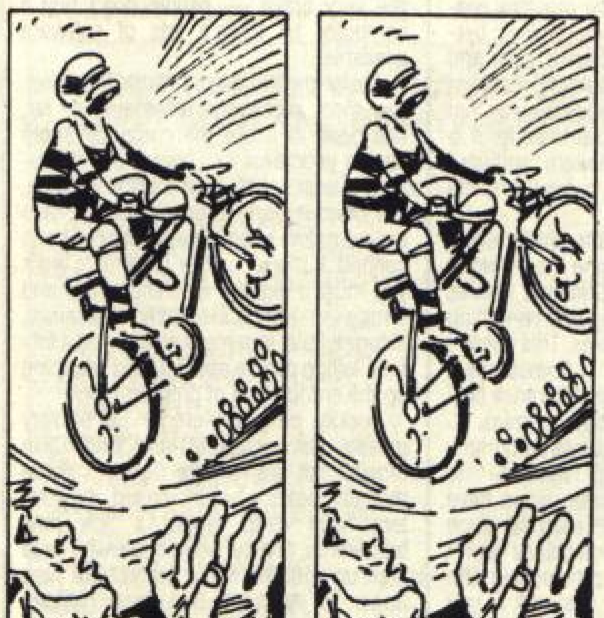
Being the season of goodwill to man..er..personkind, Uncle Steve does realise that lots of people can't fit onto one BMX bike (or even in one Lotus Esprit for that matter!) so thirty runners up will all be able to thrill to the speed and daring of driving around a TV screen, blowing up the aliens and saving the entire population of the universe.

Funny old world you find yourself in, playing *Space Harrier*. I mean, you go to all the trouble of hiring a ship and filling it full of go-juice, all paid for out of your own pocket and no-one really seems to mind the fact that you may be blown into your constituent atoms and then there'll be no-one left to feed your cat. Ah well, such is life . . .

Space wars. Huh! Good job it's not for real . . . It's a lot more fun zooming along on a BMX bike doing stunts and impressing everyone else on the BMX track with your skills as a rider. And there's no chance of having your constituent atoms spread across the galaxy providing you make sure to wear all the right safety gear . . .

Inspired by another ELITE hit, our very own Oli Frey has come up with a BMX biking scene — and as is his wont, he's drawn two versions. Spot all the differences in the second picture, ring them round in biro, complete the entry form and whizz it all off to me. You could be the envy of your friends sooner than you think!

The first two all-correct entries will earn their senders a BMX Bike like the one illustrated here as a 'just missed Christmas' present from jolly Steve at ELITE but he'll try to send it round to your house rather than fill his wellies full of soot trying to get it down your chimney. Thirty runners up are set to collect a copy of *Space Harrier* . . . Closing date is 20th January, so you'd better make sure I have all your entries by then. Send them to me at **BMX BIKER, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB**





NAME ..............................

ADDRESS ..............................

..............................

..........POST CODE ..............................

# IS IT A SPECTRUM? NO IT'S A SPECULATOR!

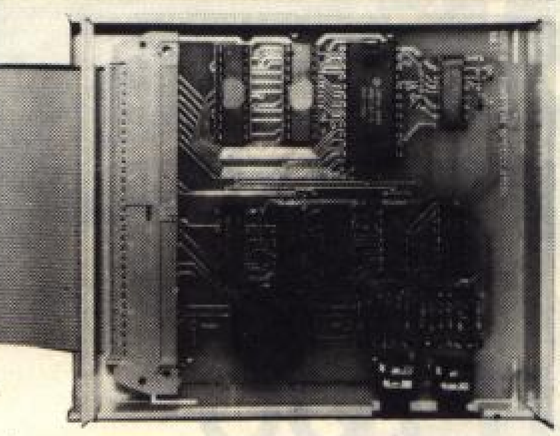




**Everybody knows that you can't run programs for one computer on a different make. Everyone, that is, except Tony Brewer, inventor of the *Speculator* — a brilliant device which turns a Memotech or Tatung Einstein into a near-perfect impersonation of the Spectrum! Simon Goodwin tests the amazing Spectrum emulators sold by SYNTAXSOFT and ponders on incompatibility problems in general.**



**I've seen it, and it works. You can load top-selling Spectrum games directly from the original tape into an Einstein or Memotech, and they run as if they had been specially programmed for that system. Not an amazing leap forward for Spectrum owners — but it's a breakthrough, nonetheless.**



***Inside the Einstein SPECULATOR . . .***

## COMPROMISES

Up until now, incompatibility has ruled the computer industry. Without software, a computer is just a plastic door-stop. But manufacturers have to make each new machine as cheap and 'feature-packed' as possible. Every popular machine represents a whole set of compromises: between hardware and software, cost and quality, speed and complexity. Each of these compromises changes the way that a machine must be programmed for it to obtain best results. Modern software pushes every brand of computer to its limits.

Since the limits are different for every machine, programs for one model won't run on other systems. Software houses spend a fortune changing and re-writing games for different systems. This doesn't always work very well . . . Sometimes it doesn't work at all — the difference between the computers is just too great.

It is cost-effective to convert programs from one best-selling machine to another. After all, computer users have similar tastes and tend to read the same adverts, even if their machines won't speak to one another. It's the people with less popular machines who get a raw deal. Unless a few hundred thousand people buy a new machine, it's just not worth the effort of rewriting programs for them.

## VICIOUS CIRCLE

So there's a vicious circle. Programs don't get converted until there's a big demand from users, and — unless they are very brave — people don't buy a computer till there's lots of software available.

There are two ways to break this loop. The most successful technique, so far, has been to make the computer seem such a good deal that people buy it anyway. In essence this is a confidence trick, but when it works properly the software arrives before people realise they've been conned. If this technique is going to work you must make the machine cheap and trendy — and inevitably, therefore, incompatible. You must also spend a fortune telling people about it, and whipping up the enthusiasm of programmers.

Luckily, programmers tend to be very gullible. Between 1980 and 1983 Clive Sinclair got the mixture right . . . Since then competition has increased, the punters have been taught a few new buzzwords, and the only people who have kept up with the home market are Alan Sugar, of Amstrad, and Jack Tramiel, originally owner of Commodore and now leading most of the same people in a slimmed-down Atari Corporation.

They both sell on price, first and foremost, although Tramiel would have you believe otherwise. Real innovation is out of fashion. As Adam Osbourne put it, 'he who lives at the leading edge of technology is destined to be sacrificed upon it'. Osbourne proved this by example — he set up the first famous portable computer firm, which duly went bust. Every year dozens of manufacturers, large and small, try to break into the micro market. Alas, this vicious circle catches all but a few.

Almost everyone in the trade has a vested interest in keeping conversion overheads down, which means limiting the number of 'hit' machines. This just makes a 'hit' even more profitable, encouraging more manufacturers to rush into the market like lemmings over a cliff.

## CLONES

I said that there were two ways out of the vicious circle. You don't have to innovate. It is possible to carve out a niche in the market by selling a copy of someone else's machine, and taking advantage of existing software — but this is a risky business. For a start, your machine will be considered old-fashioned, whether or not this really matters. Secondly, you'll have head-on competition, from people already established in your market.

There are three ways to counter this, and to succeed you must use all three. You have to advertise like crazy, undercut competitors' prices, and try to add something to the formula in order to make your version stand out and seem new, yet still attractively compatible. This is a very expensive business.

Amstrad, Compaq, and Olivetti have gambled and won — many others have failed. In the home market the pressure to innovate, either to cut costs or improve performance, is intense. Manufacturers have trouble making even THEIR OWN new machines compatible with their predecessors. When Sinclair made a minor change to the Spectrum, putting a new kind of low-power logic array in the Issue 3 version, the tiny changes involved stopped many popular games.

The brilliant thing about the Spectrum Plus was that it used EXACTLY the same works as the old rubber-keyed Spectrum, but eventually Sinclair were forced to make real changes, albeit modest ones, to catch up with the competition. The Spectrum 128 compatibility problems had begun.

This dilemma affects every computer firm. In the interests of compatibility, Commodore's new 64C machine has a diabolical BASIC interpreter that dates from 1980. The new model is limited to the graphics and sound of 1982. The need for compatibility has also held back Atari's XE machines — Jay Miner's design was way ahead of its time in 1979, but it's looking pretty tired now.

## THE SOLUTION

It should be clear that it is very difficult to make one computer compatible with another. This is especially true if you want to run fast, complicated state-of-the-art programs, because these tend to take advantage of hardware quirks. Yet the Speculator for the Memotech, and the Spectrum Emulator for Tatung's Einstein machine, really work. You can run complex programs such as *Elite*, *Starion* and *Tornado Low Level* from the original cassettes.

The colours are sometimes a slightly different shade, and some programs run a little more slowly, but the games are as good as any conversion might be expected to be. The Emulators are designed by **Tony Brewer** and sold by SYNTAXSOFT, a Burnley firm that — ironically — specialises in converting programs between machines the hard way, rewriting the code line by line.

The Memotech *Speculator* costs £29.95 and plugs securely into the left hand side of the Memotech, adding only a couple of centimetres to the width of the machine. It uses the ports that are already built into the computer.

The Einstein model comes in a bigger case — a kind of junior lunch-box — and costs £49.95, mainly because it contains sound and cassette interfaces. It hangs from the 'pipe' — alias an edge-connector with an IDC socket — at the back of the machine. Rather stupidly, Tatung

# MEMOTECH? EINSTEIN?




***The Memotech and Einstein emulators. Plug them in to the relevant machine and start playing Spectrum games!***

have not put a 'pipe' on their latest machine, the Einstein 256, so that machine won't support a *Speculator* until someone produces an adaptor. What did I say about manufacturers being unable to stay compatible with themselves?

## HOW IT WORKS

The emulators went through a long and tortuous development process. At first, Tony Brewer admits, he thought it could not be done. But he persevered, and after a year of hard work he'd managed to do what most engineers would have considered impossible. His solution won't work with all micros — it relies upon the fact that the machines use the same processor for instance — but it bridges a massive gap nonetheless.

The *Speculator* is a mixture of hardware and software. It uses two custom logic arrays and a 2K memory to impersonate the Spectrum keyboard and cassette port, and to trigger the software that mimics the Spectrum's display. 64K of RAM is needed, plus separate video memory. The emulator pretends that 48K is normal Spectrum RAM, and packs new machine-code to emulate the Spectrum ROM and other features into the remaining 16K of memory.

To avoid copyright problems, Tony has completely re-written the routines that are built-in to the Spectrum. The cassette code is improved, for instance, and can easily be adapted to cope with different speeds — but it still emulates the flashing border of a real Spectrum. Routines to print characters, clear the screen, read the keyboard and so on can be called as normal, but the code is changed to reflect the different hardware. Some parts of the Spectrum ROM, like the floating-point calculator, are not used in commercial software, so a new emulation code has been slotted into that space.

The Einstein and the Memotech both use a Texas Instruments video chip, rather than the Spectrum's all-purpose custom ULA. The TI chip is also used in MSX computers, so a similar emulator could, in theory, run on those machines.

The TI chip can produce the same 256 by 192 dot resolution as the Spectrum, but there the resemblance ends. It is not memory-mapped, so the processor has to talk to it character by character through 'ports'. This makes it much slower than the Spectrum, but Tony has found an ingenious quirk which allows him to update any sixth of the screen 50 times a second, funnelling information from the Spectrum's display area, where the games put it, through the ports.

Tony's electronics generate appropriate timing signals, and a small change to the loader lets him determine which parts of the display are updated most often. For instance most of the action on *Starion* takes place in the top two thirds of the display. For *Starion*, Tony's code refreshes the bottom third less often, so that the rest of the display is almost as fast as the Spectrum's.

Colour is tricky too, because the TI display chip needs eight times as much colour information as the Spectrum does. Tony's code checks the whole attribute grid and only transmits colour information for parts that change. This seems to work very well in practice. The Spectrum's eight colours are mapped onto the closest shades in the TI chip's pallette of 16. The hardware detects attempts to change the Spectrum's border colour and re-directs the information, but it can only do this 50 times a second when a game is running. In general that's quite fast enough, but it rules out the 'colour bar' effects that spice up a few Spectrum games.

The graphic emulation works well enough, although there is a certain amount of extra flicker, and the gadget does nothing to cure the Spectrum's attribute problems. I noticed that *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* ran a little slowly and unsteadily at times, but it was still playable.

The same faults exist on the Spectrum version, but they're not as obvious: as Tony Brewer says, "The Emulators accentuate the things which aren't done very well on the Spectrum."

Sound is handled through a tiny beeper in the Einstein box — "well, it's supposed to emulate the Spectrum, isn't it!", said Tony. The Memotech re-directs Spectrum clicks to the computer's sound chip, giving odd effects at times. In theory it would be possible to emulate all of the sound-effects from a Spectrum 128 game, but the 128 poses other problems, and there are no plans to do this at the moment.

## USING THE EMULATOR

The system must be set up in different ways to get best results on each game, so you are limited to a certain range. A cassette or disk supplied with the emulator contains code to handle the first 20 games; further compilations are being prepared. You have to load the game from a Spectrum cassette at first, but you can then copy it to Memotech or Einstein disk, to speed up loading.

All programs on the emulator work with joysticks or the cursor keys, and the keyboard works much like normal — the right hand shift key emulates the Spectrum's Symbol Shift. You can also turn sounds on and off, and pause any game, using the function keys.

The starter-pack supports 20 popular but rather old titles. SYNTAXSOFT's Keith Hook defends the choices, saying, "they may be old games on the Spectrum, but they're new to Einstein and Memotech users." More recent hits are being set up, but there's no prospect of a universal emulator; this was a great relief for Michael Gaut, a humble conversions programmer at SYNTAXSOFT!

Apparently the biggest problem setting up the *Speculator* to support a game is getting the code into memory; most games nowadays use trick loaders which rely on the exact Spectrum hardware, so a special Memotech or Einstein loader must be written by Tony Brewer. Getting the actual game to run is a cinch by comparison — most of the time it just involves setting the speed at which different areas of the screen are refreshed.

There may be a solution to the cassette problem. If Spectrum code could be sold (at an appropriate price) on Memotech or Einstein disks, it could by-pass the cassette stage. This would need the approval of the original publishers, but things look quite hopeful at the moment.

One question still remains. Do Einsteiners and Memotechies actually want to run Spectrum games on their computers? As a CRASH writer, I think so; but a second-hand Spectrum only costs about £50, and 90 per cent of Einstein users are said to be business people.

David Bell of Tatung doesn't expect many converts from the Sinclair stable. "The Emulator is an enhancement for the Einstein, not a replacement for the Spectrum, with disks and so on. There are a number of people who want games on the Einstein, and now they can run programs they otherwise couldn't"

SYNTAXSOFT's Keith Hook felt that Memotech and Einstein users would be too proud to buy a Spectrum — but they might buy an emulator. "People who've got Einsteins won't buy Spectrums. But they'd like the software. We're letting them ride on the back of the Spectrum's popularity."

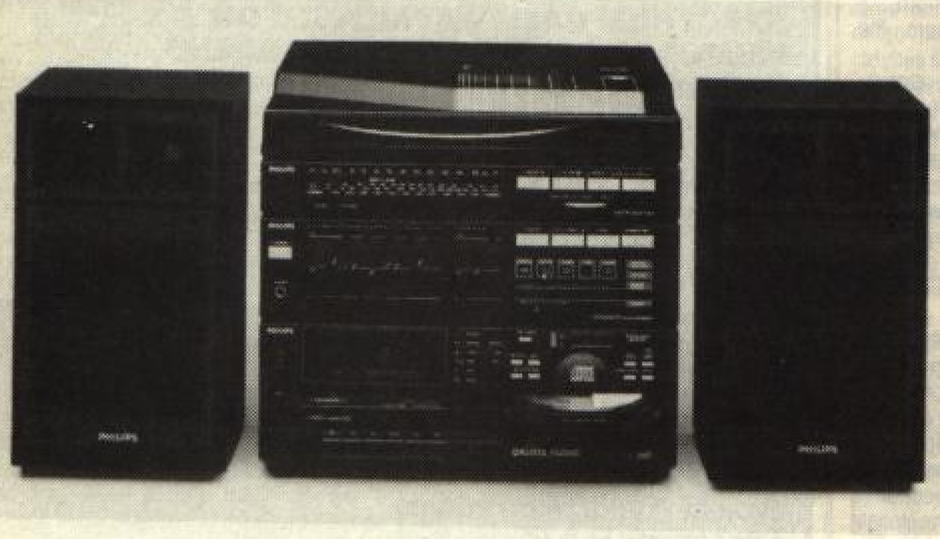
For Tony Brewer it has been a fascinating, if rather unremunerative, experiment. "I don't thing there's anything that can't be done with a computer, if you think about it", he said. He should know!

**SPECTRUM GAMES AVAILABLE ON MEMOTECH AND EINSTEIN SCREENS**

*Arcadia* **Imagine**
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*Starion* **Melbourne House**
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*Elite* **Firebird**
*Airwolf* **Elite**

# WIN TUNEFUL GREMLIN GR



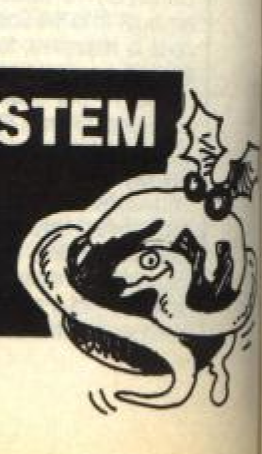



Crash Competition

**FIRST PRIZE: A PHILIPS MIDI COMPACT DISC HIFI SYSTEM**

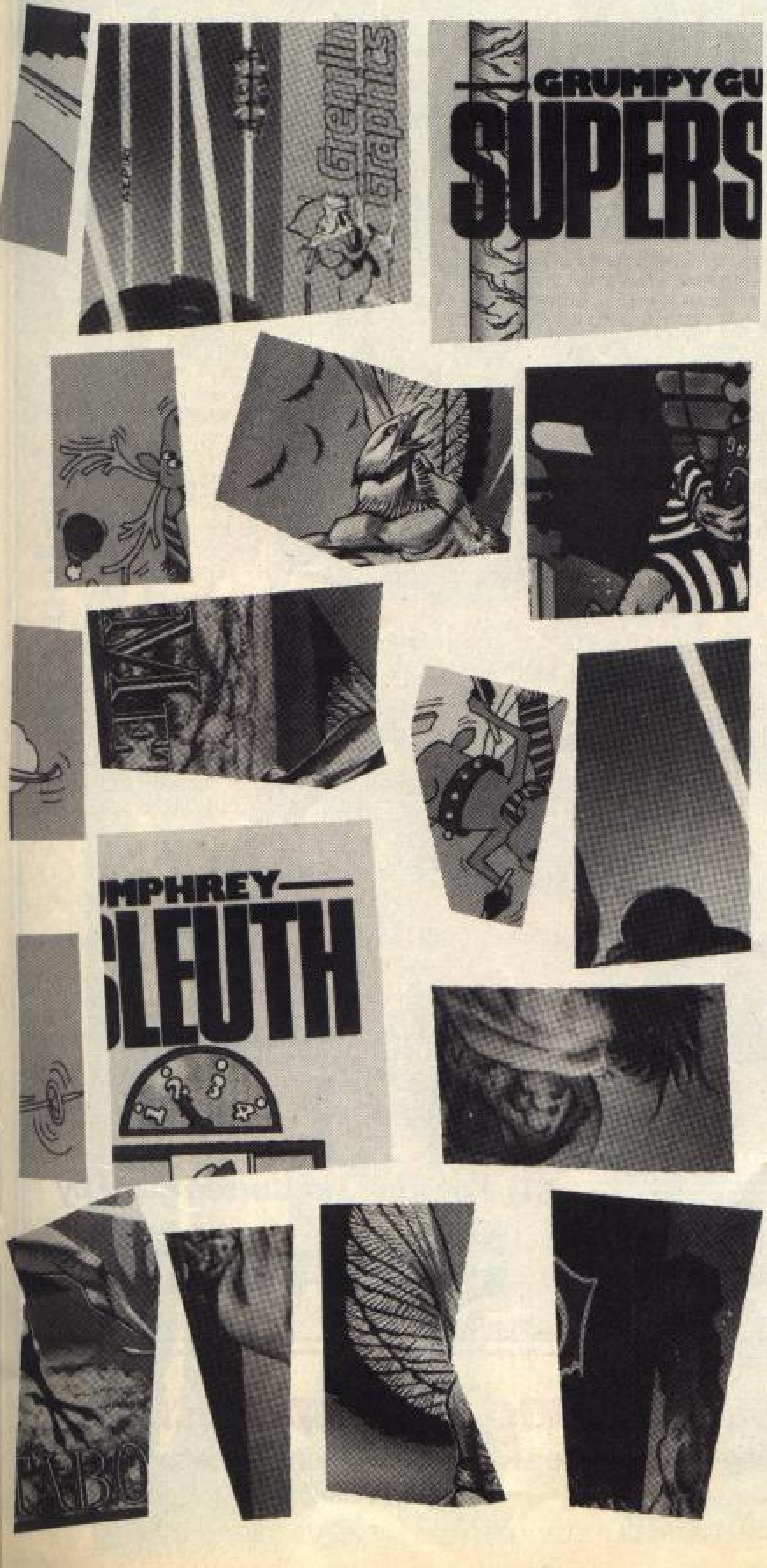
**SECOND PRIZE: A SHARP GHETTO BLASTER**

**25 RUNNERS UP CAN CHOOSE ONE GREMLIN GRAPHICS GAME**



# PRIZES WITH

# APHICS




Christmas time is always busy here at the Towers. There'll be no carol singing for me this Christmas . . . trouble is, I don't expect I'll get anything in the stocking I hang hopefully from the handle of the broomcupboard door — either Santa doesn't dare come into the Towers or the nasty reviewers sneak in and pinch all my goodies first thing on Christmas morning.

The folks at GREMLIN GRAPHICS have got some super Christmas pressies to give away to readers this year — lots of musical goodies and games too . . . but you'll have to help me with a little problem if you want to collect a prize.

I made a terrible mistake. Ian Stewart, the bossman at GREMLIN sent me a Chrissy card along with the inlays for four GREMLIN games that he thought I'd like to give to them up in ART to use in a competition. Trouble is, he put them all in a brown envelope — just like the official-looking brown envelopes the nasty reviewers use when they try to scare me. Imagine my panic when I first opened one of these letters to find a Final Demand for £500 for non-payment of a bill for cleaning materials supplied to the broom cupboard! I was worried for hours until I noticed the sniggering going on in the reviewing pen.

I've had all sorts of nasty surprises inside these official-looking envelopes over the past few months — fake warrants for my arrest, paternity suits naming my pet hamster — the lot. So I've taken to tearing up official-looking envelopes the moment they are shoved under my door. Hence my mistake.

I suddenly noticed, among the bits on the floor, the pieces of a Christmas card, together with torn shreds of some game inlay cards and the fragments of a letter. I managed to piece together the letter, and discovered that Ian Stewart wants to give away some very nice pressies indeed.

Top of his list of Festive Goodies is a Philips compact disc midi hi-fi system. Next on his Santa list is a Sharp Ghetto Blaster. Then he's got a giant jiffybag waiting — waiting for someone to say which five GREMLIN games they'd like to have put into it before it's posted. And twenty five more envelopes are waiting to be filled with a single GREMLIN game. . . .

## SO YOU'D LIKE UNCLE IAN TO PLAY SANTA THIS YEAR?

I've asked ART to arrange for all the bits of Christmas card and game inlay to be placed delicately on this page — just like they fell to the floor when I ripped the envelope and its contents. Can you put them back together again? Cut em up, stick em down on a bit of card or paper, fill in the entry form and whizz your re-assembled collage to me at CRASH GREMLIN COMPETITION, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1AQ making sure the jobs's time to arrive by 20th January 1987.

**Tick the five games from the following list that you would like to receive if you win the giant Jiffybag, and circle the one game you'd like to get if you are a runner-up**

- ☐ MONTY ON THE RUN
- ☐ THE WAY OF THE TIGER
- ☐ CRASH SMASHES I (Night Gunner, Spy Hunter, Dun Darach, Alien 8)
- ☐ BOUNDER
- ☐ JACK THE NIPPER
- ☐ TRAILBLAZER

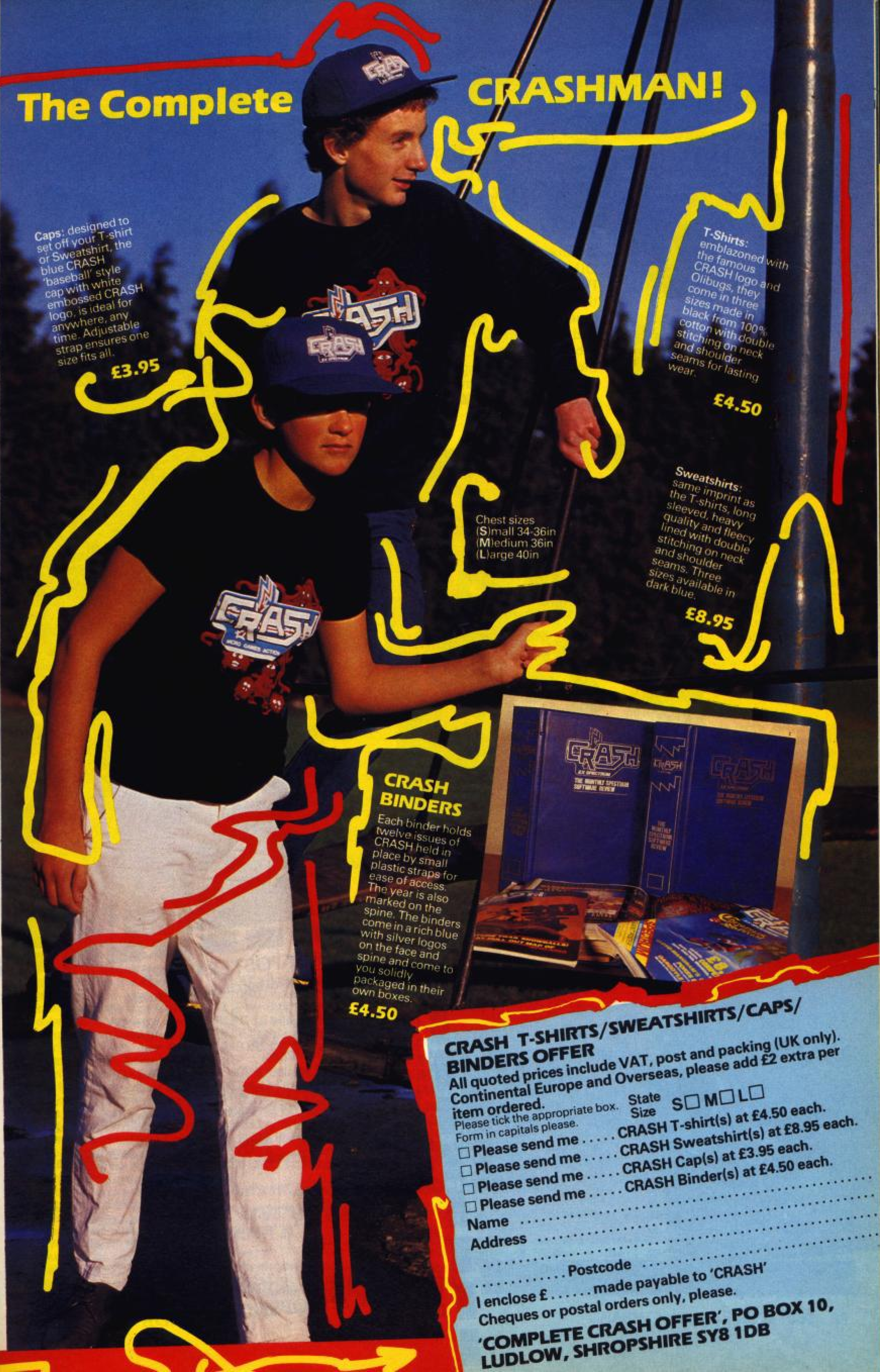
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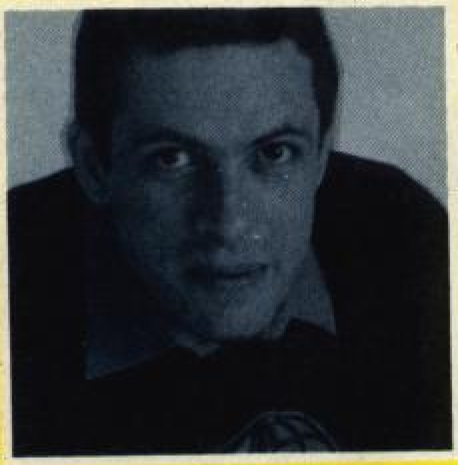
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Hannah Smith

# PLAYING TIPS



Merry Christmas faithful Playing Tips readers. Hope it's snowy where you are. There's nothing here in Ludlow, but then we generally get ignored by everything living up here, weather included. Sigh. I've got a terrible cold as usual. Talk about country air being healthy, I don't think!

Anyway, we've been making the office look a bit festive recently. Graeme went out and bought a lovely Christmas Tree and everyone in CRASH helped to decorate it. Unfortunately, despite my warning in the last issue about testing the fairy lights before actually plugging them in, there's always someone who doesn't listen. This time it was the faithful Comps Minion. He plugged them in and switched on. There was a loud pop and all the lights in the office went out. All over the building you could hear agonised shrieks as people almost fell over themselves to get to the Save key as all the computer screens went blank. Of course it was nothing to do with me . . . but being Christmas no-one was really very upset and I spent the rest of the morning trying to get the Comps Minion under the mistletoe . . . and boy, does he blush!

I hope you like the array of festive tips and POKEs I've got this month. Owing to the Christmas schedules everything has been a bit hectic so I hope there aren't any mistakes, but you know what this festive spirit can do to you (hic)!

The Top Tipster this month is Mark Bettis for his highly detailed tips on *Infiltrator*. An amazing amount of game play must have gone into getting right through this game. Most people at CRASH, and ZZAP! for that matter, couldn't even get through the first section! Top Cartographers are Andrew Payne and Paul Barrett who sent in the first map of *The Great Escape*. Thanks lads and I hope you don't mind sharing the prize between the two of you, but I take it you are the best of mates anyway!

Enough of this wittering and on with the bumper Christmas Special Playing Tips.

## URIDIUM POKES

***Uridium*, HEWSON'S latest hit game must be one of the hardest shoot 'em ups on the market for ages. Trying to negotiate your tiny craft over the the massive Dreadnoughts and knock out the opposition at the same time is no mean feat. Anyway, your prayers have been answered by** Chris Wild **who lives near Oldham in Lancs. Chris has sent in some infinite lives POKEs for the dastardly little game (yipee says Lee Paddon who's been playing the game for weeks and still hasn't got beyond Dreadnought Three, hee, hee) (mind you girlie tipster couldn't get through Dreadnought One ho ho — ED)**

**Simply type this program into your Spectrum and press RUN. Line 105 gives you infinite lives, but if you're feeling really silly then enter the extra line:**

```
106 DATA 62,195,50,14,176
```

**This means that you can fly around shooting just the stationary objects, and no aliens will come and get you. Beware this routine doesn't always work if you're in two players mode. Anyway, here's the all important program**

```
10 LET add=65368
11 READ w
12 IF w=999 THEN GO TO 15
13 POKE add,w
14 LET add=add1: GOTO 11
15 BORDER 0: PAPER0: INK0:
CLS
16 RANDOMIZE USR 65368
100 DATA 62,255,55,221,33,39
101 DATA 244,17,125,2,205,86
102 DATA 5,48,243,62,255,55
103 DATA 221,33,0,64,17,0
104 DATA 191,205,86,5
105 DATA
62,201,50,237,139,62,195,50,38,
139
10 DATA 195,80,253,999
```

## URIDIUM POKES MARK II

**Here's another *Uridium* routine for those of you who want a really easy life during the game. Not only do you have infinite lives in this version, but you won't die when you collide with the Dreadnought and you won't snuff it either if nasty alien ships biff you or if a mine sneaks up on you. Using this routine you can quite happily romp through all the Dreadnoughts and see what the rest of the game is all about. If however, you're not into anything quite as namby-pamby as this then use the other POKEs this issueas these give you infinite lives, but it's still possible to die, although you won't loose a life in the process.**

```
10 CLEAR 62719
20 RESTORE
30 LET weight=2
40 LET TOT=0
50 FOR i=23296 TO 23364
60 READ a: LET TOT=TOT+
weight*a
70 POKE i,a: LET
weight=weight+1
80 NEXT i
90 IF TOT<>247462 THEN
PRINT "ERROR IN DATA":
BEEP 1,0: STOP
100 POKE 23353,0: REM RES 0
COLLISION (can't be killed by
hitting a Dreadnought)
110 POKE 23558,0: REM ALIEN
COLLISION AND MISSILE HITS
(won't be killed by aliens or mis-
siles)
120 PRINT AT 21,7; "START
URIDIUM TAPE"
130 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
1000 DATA 49, 0, 92, 221, 33
1001 DATA 0, 0, 17, 125, 2
1002 DATA 62, 255, 55, 205, 86
1003 DATA 5, 48, 238, 221, 33
1004 DATA 0, 64, 17, 0, 27
1005 DATA 62, 255, 55, 205, 86
1006 DATA 5, 221, 33, 0, 0
1007 DATA 17, 0, 1, 62, 255
1008 DATA 243, 205, 169, 5, 221
1009 DATA 33, 0, 92, 17, 0
1010 DATA 164, 62, 255, 205, 169
1011 DATA 5, 62, 1, 50, 168
1012 DATA 152, 62, 2, 50, 147
1013 DATA 53, 195, 80, 253
```

## DANDY HINT

Robert Moran **and** Richard Cowdery **from Hanworth in Middlesex, who sent in a cheat for *Nightmare Rally* in the November Issue have come up with another little gem, this time to help you through** Electric Dreams' ***Dandy*.**

**Load in the third level and while you're running around the maze you will come across a room with no exits (apart from the one you've just come through). There is a generator in each corner and a line of objects at the bottom. If you shoot nasties on the screen and destroy all the generators by shooting them, then an amazing thing will happen. Next time you play the game, the top generators will be replaced with keys and treasure which will be a great help to you on the next maze. Now there's a thing. So yaa, boo and sucks to Richard and Robert's schools friends because it *is* them, so there!**

## CHRIS JETMAN TURNER HELPLINE

Chris *Jetman* Turner **is still helping you with your queries about programming etc..However, he does have one request and so do I. Chris asks if anyone wants to correspond with him could they do it by letter and not by 'phone or personal appearences. Apparently he's had some people turning up at his pub and hassling him for information when all the poor lad wants is a quick Perrier and a rest after a hard day replying to all your letters..**

**And I'd be very grateful if people wanting to get in touch with Chris could do it directly to this address and NOT to me at CRASH:**

**CHRIS JETMAN TURNER, THE CARDIGAN ARMS, KIRKSTALL ROAD, LEEDS 4**

**Ta from both of us.**

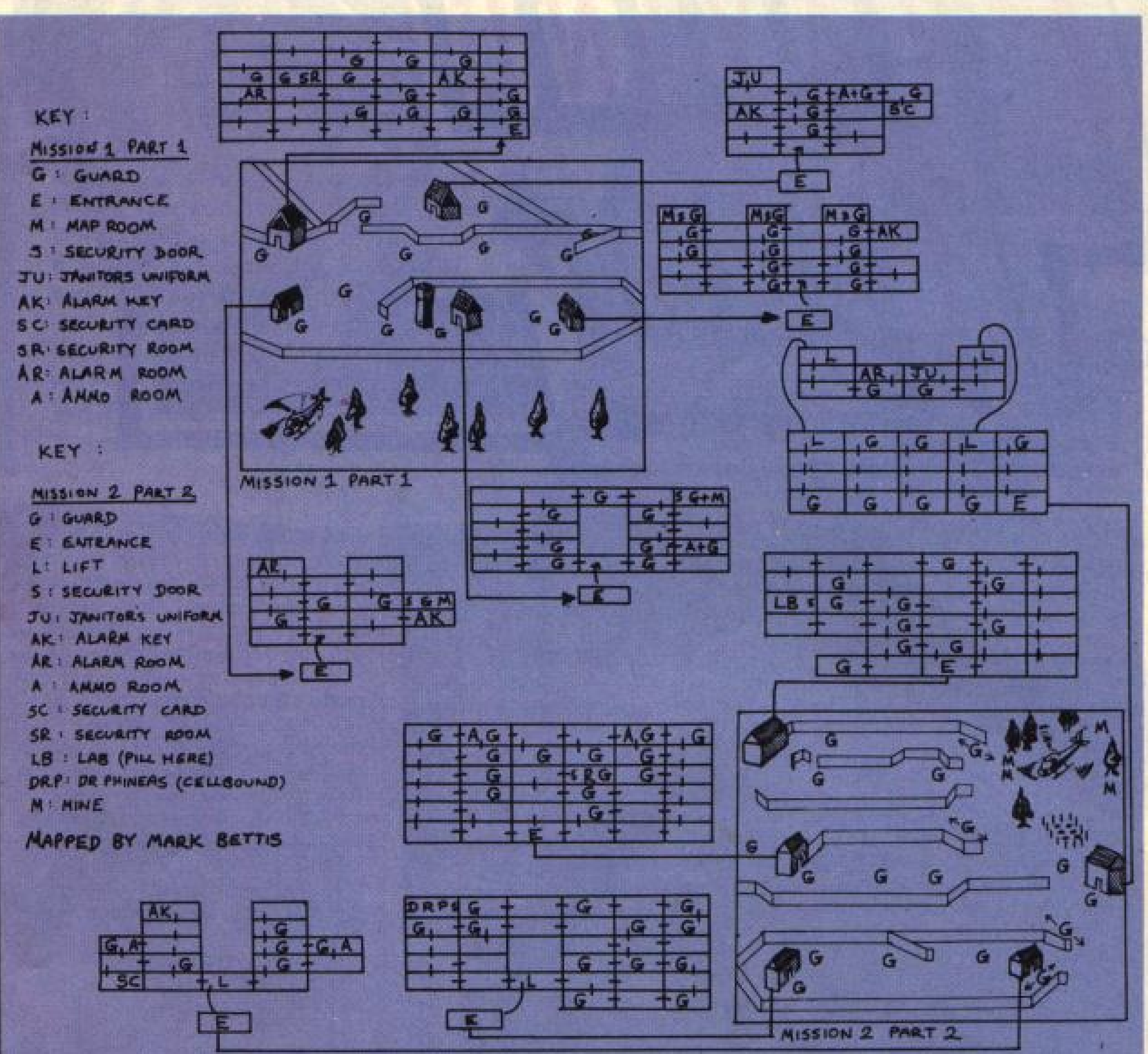
## TERRA COGNITA POKES

***Terra Cognita* is one of the latest budget games from CODE MASTERS and quite a few people seem to be having trouble getting thorough it. So in case any more Spectrums are in danger of being hurled through bedroom windows, here's a program from** Jonathan Davies **from Bishopston in Bristol which will do all sorts of useful things to the game. Type in and simply delete any unwanted POKEs. After it's all been typed in press RUN and play *Terra Cognita* tape from the start.**

```
10 PRINT AT 16,0: INK 8: PAPER
8: FLASH 8: BRIGHT 8: OVER 1:
LOAD "" CODE 16384: LOAD ""
CODE
20 POKE 50615,0 : POKE
50616,0: POKE 44486,0: REM
infinite fuel
30 POKE 42774,n: POKE
45427,n: REM n=no. of lives
40 POKE 45004,0: REM infinite
lives
50 RANDOMIZE USR 30000
```

## INFILTRATOR TIPS

***Infiltrator* by US Gold is rather a tricky game to do well in. It certainly gave us some gype in the CRASH office when we were trying to review it.** Mark Bettis, **from Chelmsford in Essex certainly didn't have any trouble getting through it. Here are some tips to get you through Mission one and Mission Two. Next month I shall tell you how to complete the final chapter in *Infiltrator* and of course there'll be a map to help you as well just like this month. Good Luck Captain Zeep.**




**INFILTRATOR, MISSION ONE, PART ONE**

1. After take off set ADF to 72.8 (as shown on tactical map)
2. Keep ADF sign pointing upwards no matter what happens.
3. Accelerate to max (450 knots) and then press Turbo. Now you should be skimming along at 650 knots
4. When another aircraft appears on the screen press 4 then S and type "Request information". Some of the pilots will be alliies and some your most deadly enemies. Here6s a list of who's who:

**ALLIES**
Whipple, Haymish, Gizmo, Naples, Seth, Dwezle, Gomer To these reply "Infiltrator"
**ENEMY**
Boomer, Scum, Rhambow, Zippy, Komies, Buzz, Wheasle, Rattle. To these reply "Overlord"
You must obtain CPU contact first

5. Never open fire unless you made a mess of the password.
6. Landing-Decrease thrust to minimum (50 knots) and push forward on joystick till altimeter reaches 0. If you have made a successful landing then insert side two of the tape and proceed to Mission One , Part Two

**MISSION ONE, PART TWO**

Strategies

1. Whether you're inside or outside a building, always approach the guard (you'll stand less chance of alerting the others).
2. If your papers are unsatisfactory immediatly press the SPACE bar and switch spray the gas grenade at the guard before he rises the alarm. Then leave that screen promptly
3. Never wear the Janitors uniform and don't bother using the mine detector in the forest

**COMPLETTION-USE THE MAP**

1. Leave screen (A1) and go to (C,2). Approach the guard and then go to the top of the screen and walk along to the exit of (B,2). Go up into (B,3) and left into (A,3). Approach the guard at the top right hand exit. Go to (B,3) and enter the building
2. Forwards, up lift, left, up, right, guard, up, guard, guard, right, guard, search boxes for grenades, right, guard, down, search drawers for security card, up, guard, left, guard, left, guard, left guard, down, guard, down, guard, right, guard, down, left, enter, lift down and out.
3. Go to screen (A,3), guard, go to guard outside building in (A,3) then enter building.
4. Up, guard, up, guard, up, left, down, left, down, guard, right, guard, go to slot in the wall and hold the joystick forwards until you hear the tone and light above it turns green. Now go back the way you came not forgetting to approach both guards and exit the building.
5. Go to (A,2). Approach both guards and enter the building.
6. Enter lift (down), left, up, up, guard, s/door should be open, right, guard, inv. camera, take photo by pressing fire, inv. papers, left, guard, down, down, left, up in lift and out.
7. Now go to the building in (B,2), find the security door (open). Enter the map room and take photo. Don't forget to deal with the guards.
8. Now go to the building in (C1). Find the three map rooms. take one photo in each. When you've photographed all five map rooms, return to the chopper for mission two.

**MISSION TWO PART ONE**

This is really easy. Simply follow the instruction for Mission One , Part One.

**MISSION TWO PART TWO**

1. On leaving the chopper, switch to Mine Detector mode. Keep your finger on the fire button whilst moving around on screen (C,3)
2. First go to the building in (C,1) and search for the security card (whipole you're there stock up on your gas grenades which can be found in the ammo rooms).
3. Now go to the building in (A,2) and find the security room. When you get there insert the card.
4. Next go to the building in (A,3) and go to the labratory . Next to desk three is a chest of drawers in in this is the invisiblity pill.
5. Take the pill to the cell containing Dr Phineas in building (A,3). Once inside the cell you must go up to Dr Phineas and push forwards. Phineas is in a bit of pain because he keep saying "Are we home, Jimbo Baby?" (Sniff, sob)
6. Go to the lab again in building (A,2). Make sure you have at least five gas grenades. Plant the bomb at the table. Switch to gas grenade mode and spray any guards you come across on your way out of the building.
7. Go to screen (SA,2) and return to your helicopter with these instructions: (A,2) Guard (don't forget to be in papers mode), (B,2) Guard, (B,1) Guard, up into (C,3) in mine detector mode and over the chopper. You are now ready to progress into Mission Three, but that's all I'm going to give away this month, so you'll have to wait until February to complete the game!

## YE OLDE FAVORITES

**A couple of issues ago I asked if anyone wanted any specific POKEs/tips on old games to be printed in the mammouth Christmas Special. Most people just wrote in for tips that had already been published in CRASH, but for some reason they had missed buying that particular issue. However, here are some cheats for some CRASH games which got away from the POKEing and Tipping fingers of Mr Candy.**

## ROBIN O' THE WOOD

**Although copious maps and tips were printed if this game, I don't think there have ever been any POKEs (although I expect you'll all correct me in your hundreds if I'm wrong!).** Steven Febvre **from Havant in Hampshire decided that he'd send in these little POKEipoos for anyone who's still having problems with the game. This POKE gives you infinite lives and enables Robin to wander through leafey glades and over dappling brooks to his hearts content. Type MERGE"" and stop the tape after the header. BREAK and put the POKE in after the RANDOMIZE USR statement.**
**POKE 49911,0**



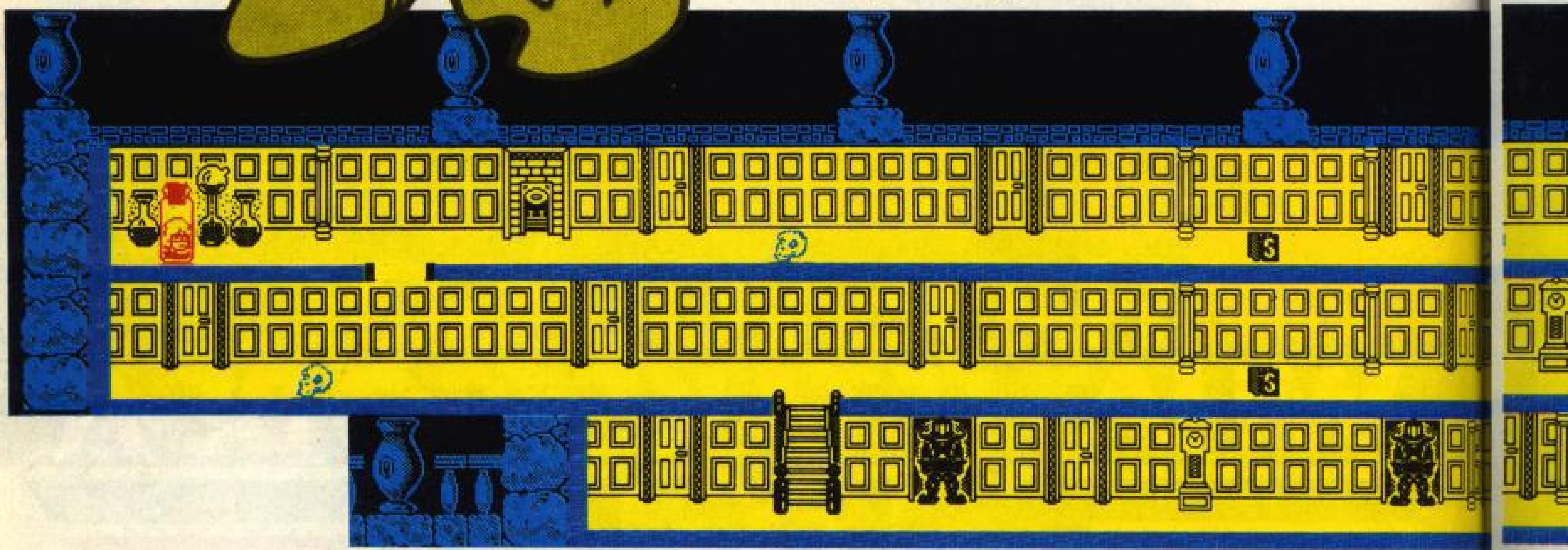
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# HI! IT'S SCOOBY DOO THE MAP!

***Those everso nice people at** Elite **have sent in this handy map of Scooby Doo.*** **Just the first level issue, but there'll be more next issue. Promise.**





# THE RAMBO SOLUTION

**With *Cobra*, the game after** Sylvester Stallone's **new blockbuster film about to grace the streets, it seemed apt to print this solution to *Rambo*. Lots and lots of people wrote in asking for POKEs or tips. Thanks to** Tim Gough **from Norwich you can now complete the game if you follow their tips correctly.**

**START:**
Only use the knife when you have to, any other weapon will attract too much attention. Find the rocket launcher as it is essential later on in the game. Pick up weapons for high scores.

**PCW CAMP:**
Blow up the bridge that leads to the camp with a grenade. Enter the camp and switch back to the knife. Run up to the prisoner tied to the stake. When you get close enough he is automatically fred.

**ESCAPE:**
Straight away switch to the grenade, This weapon is the best for close fighting. Make your way North-East until you see a fence going upwards to your left. Follow it northwards until it ends. Go around it. Turn left. Carry on going west until you hit another fence. Follow this fence south go around it and turn north. Follow the fence upwards and turn north-east until you come to another fence which is shorter than the rest. Follow it northwards until it ends and then turn north-east and you will find a helicopter.

**THEN HELICOPTER:**
Climb into the helicopter and once you are airborne, switch to the rocket launcher and blast everything insight. Some of the building can be shot twice to earn you extra points. You can land at any helipad marked with an "H"

**THE PRISONERS:**
Fly south down the left hand side of the screen and l,and on the helipad inside the compound. Using the grenades go east until you come to a bamboo hut. Now switch to the knife and cut the prisoners free. Now peg it back to the helicopter and fly north-east and don't forget to avoid the Super Chopper on a suicide mission. Land on the helipad and run into the hangar to complete the mission.

# 1942 POKES

Phil Churchyard **has taken some time off from decorating his Christmas tree to send me these POKEs on** ELITE'S ***1942.*** **This arcade conversion is pretty difficult to stay alive in, so these**

## GALIVAN POKES

*Galivan*, IMAGINE'S latest release was reviewed in last month's CRASH. Those marauding robots in the game make it quite difficult to get onto the higher levels. However, those Industrious Hackers from Haxby and Pocklington have been pouring over their Spectrum's again this month and have come up with infinite lives to help the hassled Police Chief. (Is there no stopping the lads?). Oh, by the way thanks for the cutting about Gorgeous Pouting Loilita, Sinclair User's new Tipster of the female persuasion (Ha, ha). I don't know about another Girlie challenge though, hardly seems worth it really. Anyway, do Sinclair User have a tips section . . . .??

```
10 REM C SMITH J BEAN D
AUSTIN
20 REM GALIVAN POKES
30 RESTORE
40 CLEAR 65535
50 LET TOT=0: LET w=1
60 FOR f=50000 TO 50151
70 READ a: LET TOT=TOT+w*a
80 POKE f,a: LET w=w+1
90 NEXT f
100 IF TOT <> 1458192 THEN
PRINT "ERROR IN DATA":
BEEP 1,1: STOP
110 PRINT #1; AT 1,7; "START
GALIVAN TAPE"
120 RANDOMIZE USR 50000
1000 DATA
221,33,203,92,17,234,6,62
1010 DATA
255,55,205,86,5,48,241,243
1020 DATA
237,94,33,124,195,229,33,194
1030 DATA
98,229,51,51,17,99,252,1
1040 DATA
43,3,33,253,94,62,202,237
1050 DATA
79,195,194,98,33,150,195,229
1060 DATA
33,135,252,229,51,51,17,145
1070 DATA
252,1,253,2,33,145,252,62
1080 DATA
150,237,79,195,135,252,33,145
1090 DATA
252,17,193,138,1,92,0,237
1100 DATA
176,33,212,138,34,217,138,34
1110 DATA
221,138,33,202,138,34,229,138
1120 DATA
33,239,138,34,249,138,62,195
1130 DATA
50,13,139,33,196,195,34,14
1140 DATA
139,195,193,138,49,0,0,33
1150 DATA
217,195,17,201,255,237,83,93
1160 DATA
255,1,16,0,237,176,195,243
1170 DATA
254,33,195,145,34,104,211,33
1180 DATA
211,0,34,106,211,195,0,161
```

And that's it, bwah.

## GALIVAN TIPS

Nicolas Wood **thinks *Galivan* is "brill". And because he's been playing it to death over the past few weeks he's sent me in some tips for the first two levels. The more astute of you will notice that there are also some *Galivan* POKEs this issue as well. You know, sometimes I really think I spoil you . . . ! The really observant of you will see that Nicolas also sent in the *Frost Byte* tips this issue. Coo, he's really been busy.**

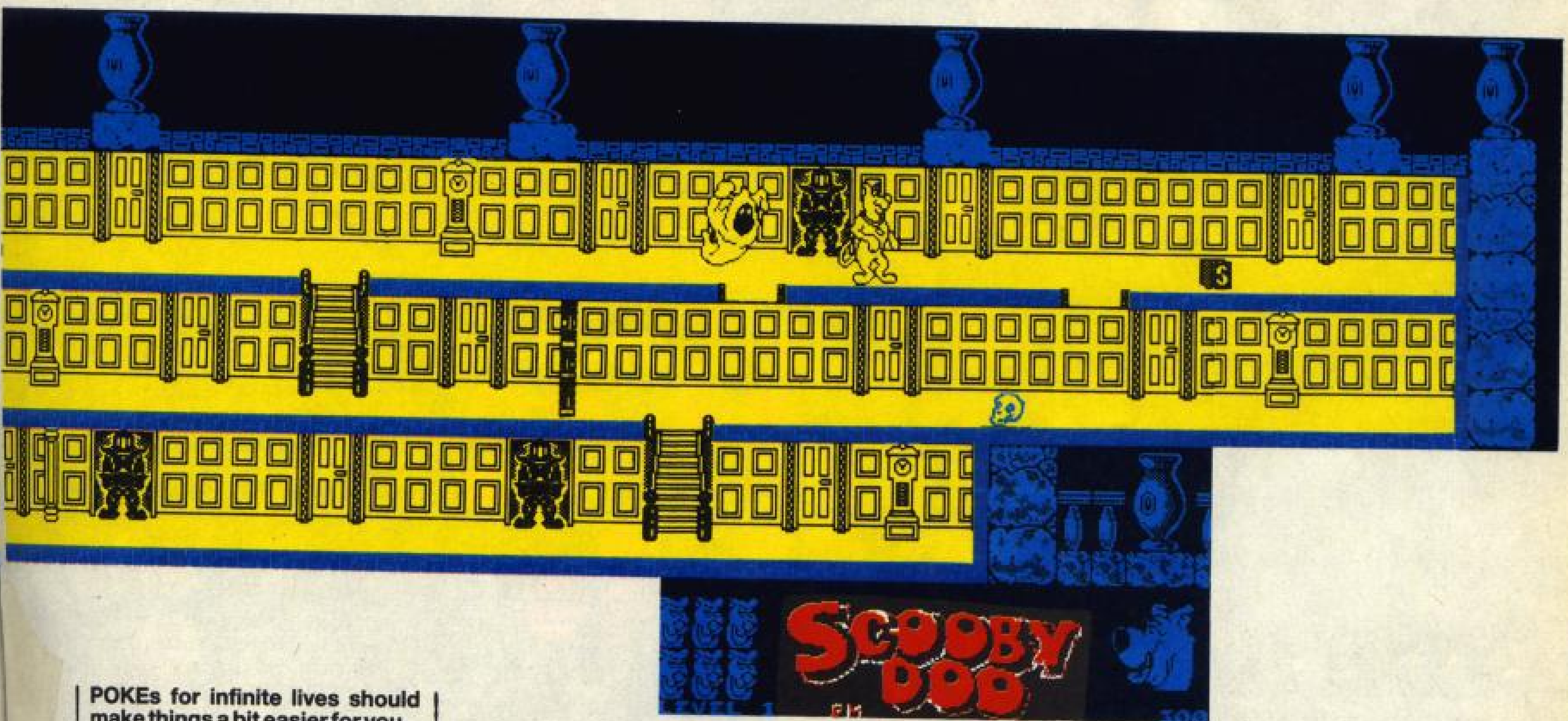
### LEVEL ONE

Go right to the first upwards staircase and get the pyramid. Go right and down the next staircase and fall off the edge. Keep going left to the next pyramid and then move left again and fall down then hole. Move left again and fall down the next hole, then down the next hole. Keep moving left to the next pyramid, then move left again to the meanie and shot it until it flashes. Then go left and up the next staircase. Shoot the meanie until it too flashes and move into the final section. Keep moving to then left to the giant Demon's Lair. If you have the Arc Blaster or the Blue Blot Neutraliser then jump up and shoot that dude. If you haven't then scurry back and get a pyramid. Move right and jump up and keep shooting the demon. Once you have shot all four parts of the demon, Galivan will move to the next level.

### LEVEL TWO

Go left and fall down the hole, then go right and fall down the next hole. Go left and pass the meanie using the method explained in,level one. Go down the next staircase. Go,left to the next downwards staircase an walk down it. Go right and fall off the edge. Go right again until the next staircase. Go past it and pick up the pyramid. Then go back and down the staircase. Go right then down the next staircase. Go left, pick up the pyramid, shoot the meanie and enter the final section. Then go left to the Giant Demon's Lair and shoot it, using the same method **as in level one.**

**Nicolas points out that levels 3,5,and 7 are the same as level one and levels 4,6,and 8 are the same as level two. So now you know.**



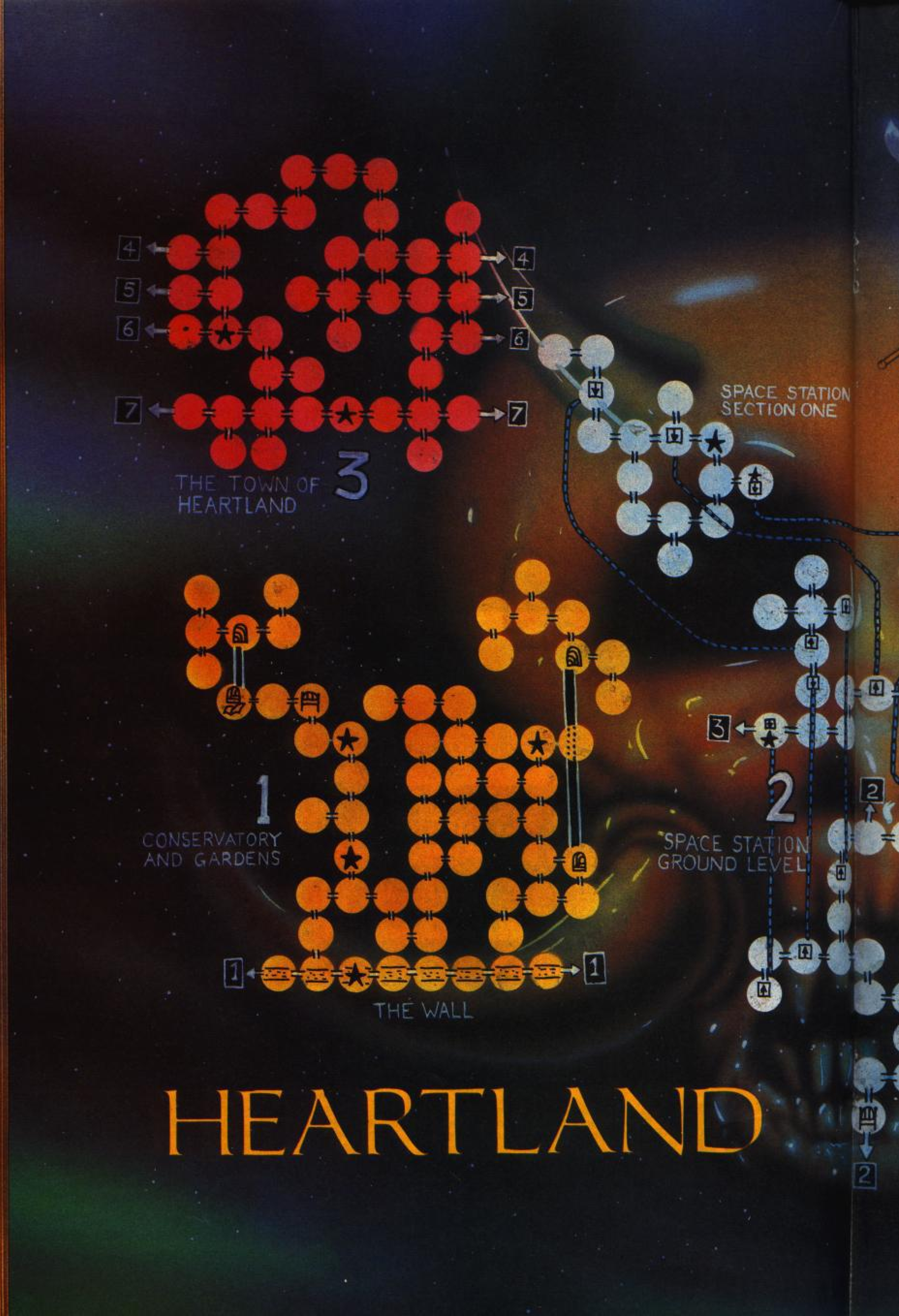

**POKEs for infinite lives should make things a bit easier for you.**

```
10 CLEAR 64999
20 PRINT AT 21,8; "START 1942
TAPE"
30 PRINT 0,0: INK 7: LOAD ""
CODE
40 POKE 65332,240: POKE
65333,255
50 RESTORE
60 FOR i=65520 TO 65527
70 READ a: POKE i,a
80 NEXT i
90 RANDOMIZE USR 65288
1000 DATA 62,33,50,247,
1010 DATA 204,195,47,204
```

## UPGRADED TURBO ESPRIT POKES

Chris *Jetman* Turner **has taken some time off from answering your letters about POKEs and hacking in general. The rest has obviously done him good because he's come up with this little program for** DURELL'S ***Turbo Esprit*, the game that just, but only just missed out on being a CRASH SMASH. Forget the infinite lives POKEs that have been printed before, Chris has now come up with a program which gives your Turbo Esprit a new experimental shell. Chris tells me that Lotus are doing some research into super strong body shafts for their vehicles, a fact which this program takes full advantage of. It's short and sweet so you won't waste any time in typing it in if you don't like what it does. One thing to take into consideration is that the hack will only work with the new version of *Turbo Esprit* which is included in the *Big 4* package.**

```
10 PAPER 0: INK 0: BRIGHT 1:
BORDER 0: CLEAR 26624
20 LOAD "" CODE 16384
30 PRINT AT 6,0;: LOAD ""
CODE
40 FOR g=0 TO 7
50 POKE 60514+g,0
60 POKE 60573+g,0
70 POKE 62434+g,0
80 NEXT g
90 RANDOMIZE USR 64785
```



4
5
6
7
THE TOWN OF HEARTLAND
3
SPACE STATION SECTION ONE
1
CONSERVATORY AND GARDENS
2
SPACE STATION GROUND LEVEL
THE WALL


# HEARTLAND


THE DESERT
10
10
5
THE DUNGEON
SUB-LEVEL ONE
THE DUNGEON
SUB-LEVEL TWO
SPACE STATION
SECTION TWO
3
2
8
9
THE DUNGEON
SUB-LEVEL THREE
4
THE CASTLE
2
8
9
KEY
POSSIBLE LOCATION OF PAGE
DOWN LIFTS
UP LIFTS
THE BED
COMPILED BY PETER ROE/JAMIE HUGGETT

## THE GREAT ESCAPE

**Only a trickle of solutions for this game have arrived on my desk here at CRASH. One of the more legible was this one from** Charlie Morgan **from Croydon in Surrey. Charlie managed to escape with the Compass and Papers, but there may be other combinations of object which will also work, so let me know if you discover any. The game's relatively new, so I won't give away the entire solution-I'll save that for the February issue. But I'll pass on enough tips to get you quite a way into the game and past some of those annoying Red Herrings that keep cropping up.**
Here is a list of objects and their uses. There are three keys altogether. Then first key is easily found in the room next to the cells; using this key you will gain access to more rooms containing a German Uniform. This is every useful because if you wear it, you can explore out of bounds rooms with a reasonable degree of safety. Ordinary soldiers will not cart you off to solitary but beware of the commandant, he's a pretty cool guy and will show you no mercy if he catches you. Also by continuously dropping and picking up the uniform you can restore your flagging energy and moral levels and boost you score by 50 points every time. It is not advisable to be wearing the uniform when you escape or else you will be shot as a spy.

The torch will be needed to explore the underground tunnel for the first time. However, if you map them then you can do without. A good place to hide your stolen object is either under the stove in your own hut, or in the red cross room

The wire cutters are the most useful object in the whole game, and without them there is no escape.

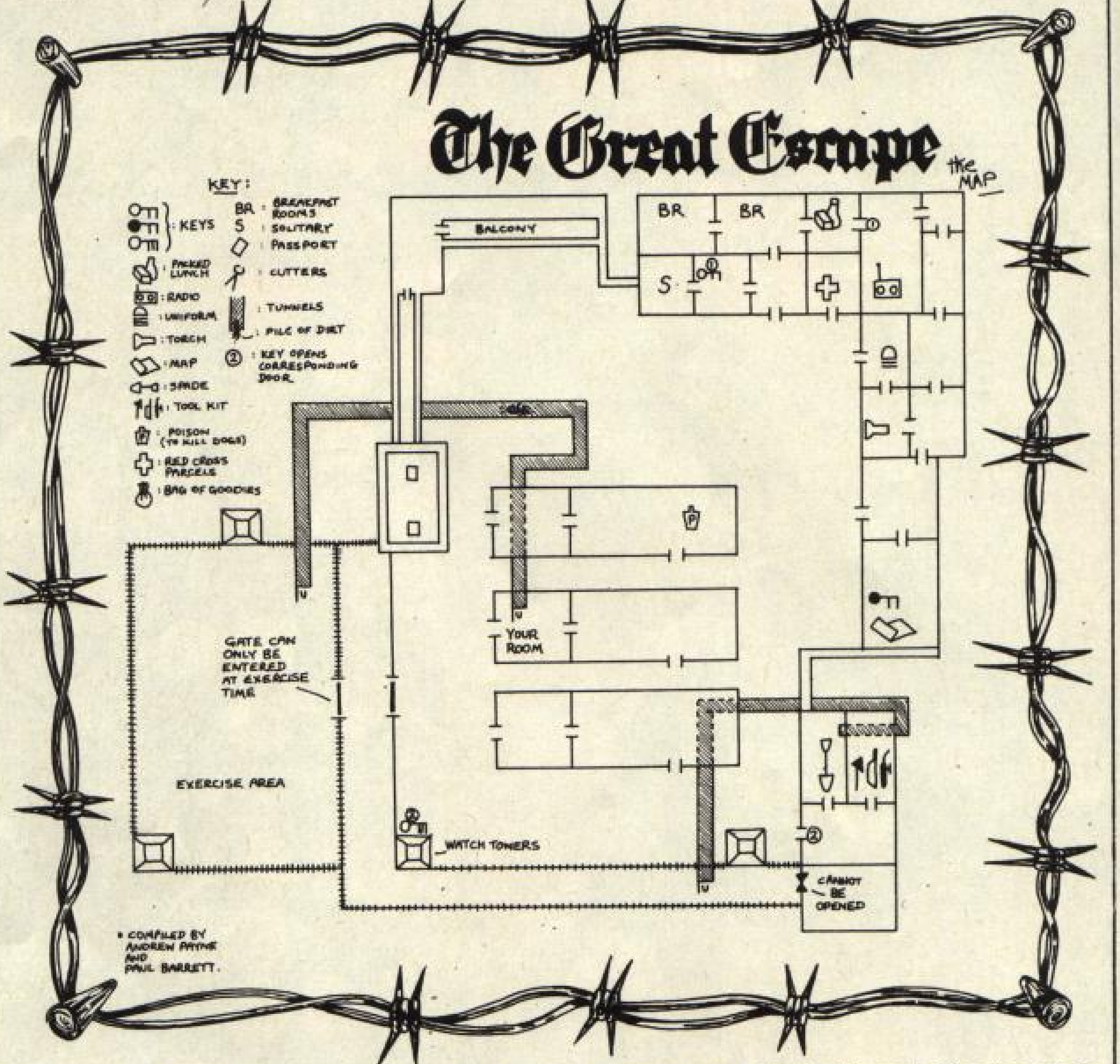
The bar of choccy acts as a great distraction. Just give it (don't drop it) to a fellow prisoner and he'll attract the guard's attention so that you can do a triple, backwards, half-twist somersault over the fence.

The compass is absolutely essential in order to escape and it's fairly self explanitory what you do with it!

The Red Cross parcels are a bit of a nuiscance. You only get one parcel a day, but there is a way around this. Get the first parcel that arrives and hide it somewhere really safe. Then deliberately get caught doing somehting really naughty and thrown in the nick for the night. When you are released the next morning another parcel will arrive and so on until you have all four.

The shovel is very useful for digging your way through one of the blocked tunnels. Charlie says he only found two tunnels; one leading from under his stove and one from inside the perimeter fence to the room where the shovel is found.

**Charlie has sent in some more of the solution, but I think it's only fair to let you work the rest of the game out for yourselves, for now.**




## INCREDIBLE SHRINKING FIREMAN TIPS (Especially for David Thompson)

**Oh joy! I can almost hear** David Thompson **putting away his chain saw. This outburst can only mean one thing. Yes! The rest of the *Incredible Shrinking Fireman* tips have arrived on my desk. Tempted though I am to scamper straight up to Northampton and give** Mark *Magic Knight* Austin **a he-uge Girlie kiss in return for sending them to me, I shall content myself with sending him some Girlie Tipster stickers instead. Let me explain. A few issues ago David wrote to Lloyd begging for the rest of the Lloyd begging for the rest of the cutie game. Alas I didn't have it. But Mark Austin has come to my rescue. Here in all their glory are the tips to get David and anyone else for that matter through the game to unshrink poor shuffling Sid. They run from the very start of the game because I can't remember where I last got to. Hokay, Mark and mega, mega thanks. XXXX**

**KEY: (because I'm too lazy to type in all the full words!)**

**R=right, L=left, U=up, D=down, PU=pick up**

R,PU ID CARD. R,R,R,R,R,R,R, PU FIREMAN'S AXE. R,R,PU SKELETON KEY, L,L,L,L,L,L,L,U,PU SET OF KEYS, D,R,R,D,R,R,R,R,R,R,R,R,R,R,U,PU PART 2 OF THE RACK, DROP FIREMAN'S AXE,D,PU BLUE KEY, L,U,U,U,DROP SET OF KEYS,PU PART 5 OF THE RACK, D,D,D,L,L,DROP SET OF KEYS, PU PART 5 OF THE RACK, D,D,D,L,L,L,L,L,DROP PART 2 OF THE RACK, DROP PART 5 OF THE RACK, L,L, L,U,R,PU YELLOW KEY, L,D,L,L,PU RED KEY, L,U,R,R, DROP ID CARD, PICK UP PART 4 OF THE RACK, D,R,D,R,R, DROP SKELETON KEY, DROP RED KEY, DROP BLUE KEY, PU PART 3 OF THE RACK, L,D,D,D,R,R,PU PART 1 OF THE RACK, L,L,D, DROP YELLOW KEY, PU PART 2 OF THE RACK, PU PART 5 OF THE RACK, L,L,L,L,L,L,U.... AND THAT'S THAT.COOOOEEY.

I hope all parties are satisfied now. Creep.

## UNIVERSAL HERO POKES

As if the cheat mode and the map printed last month weren't enough to get you through the game, some people have even taken to writing in to beg for POKEs for Universal Hero. Honestly, you people have it too easy you know. Anyway, since it's Christmas and since someone took the trouble to send it into me, here's a routine from Derek and Kevin Gale from Gateshead, Tyne and Wear for infinite lives and no monster movement for *Universal Hero*. Now you really ought to be able to finish it you know.

```
1 REM UNIVERSAL HERO POKES BY
2 REM D GALE K GALE D MARTIN
3 BORDER 0: PAPER0: INK 7: CLS
4 LET CH=1: LET TOT=0: FOR c=32768 TO 32809:
5 IF TOT <> 65801 THEN PRINT FLASH 1; "ERROR IN DATA": BEEP 1,0: STOP
6 PRINT AT 10,6; "PLAY UNIVERSAL HERO"; AT 11,8; "TAPE FROM START"
7 POKE 32800,246: POKE 32801,151: REM infinite lives
8 POKE 32805,8: POKE 32806,141: REM STOP MONSTERS
9 RANDOMIZE USR 32768
10 DATA 55, 62, 255, 0, 91, 17, 128, 0, 205, 86, 5, 48, 241, 33, 29, 128, 17, 95, 91, 1
11 DATA 13, 0, 237, 176, 195, 0, 91, 62, 0, 50, 0, 0, 62, 201, 50, 0, 0, 195, 1, 131
```



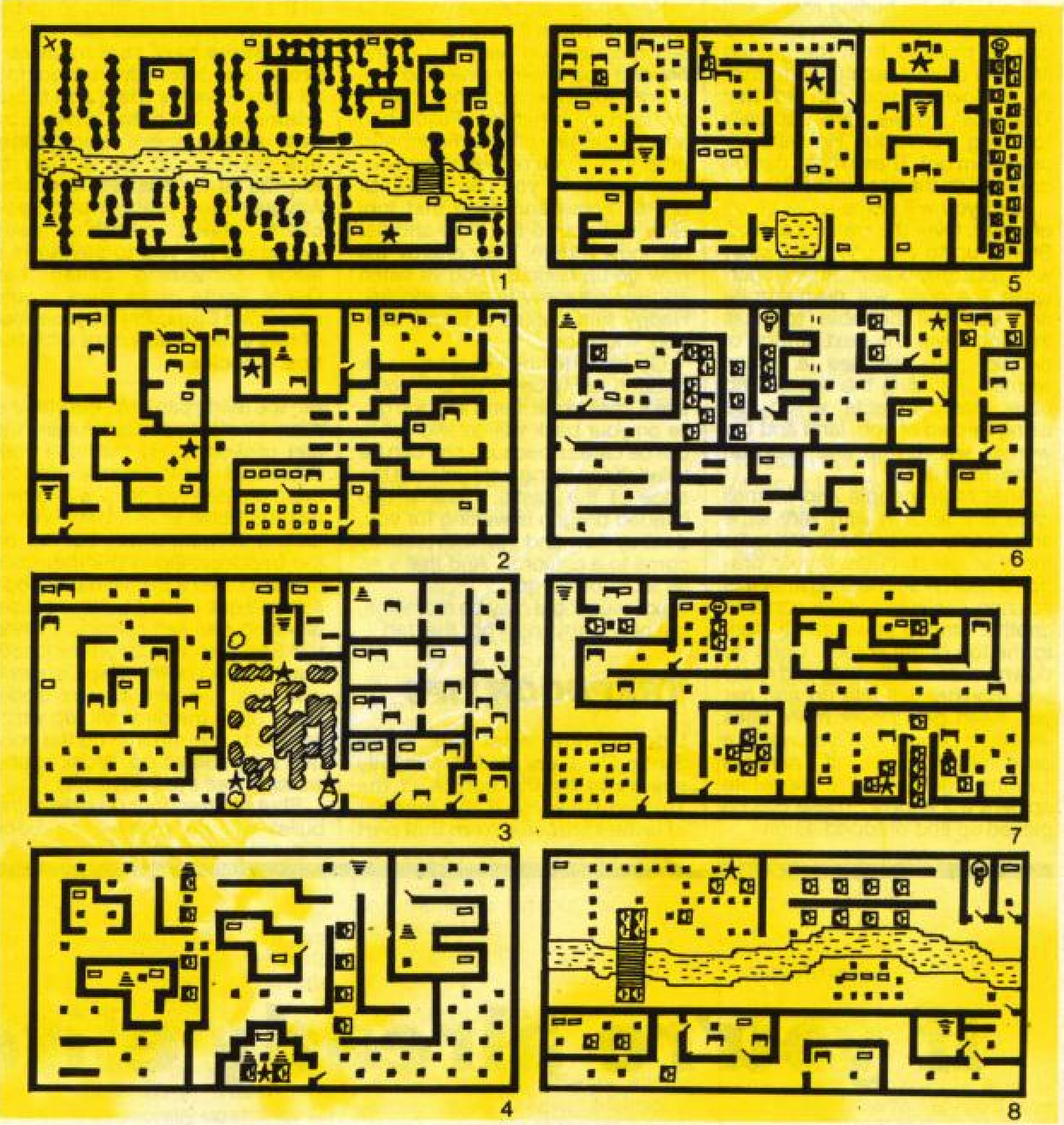
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## DRUID TIPS

**Another massive wad of tips and maps arrived at CRASH Towers from The Mega Team of Tippers from Stoke On Trent. These talented but largely anonymous lads (or maybe even ladettes) have now cracked** FIREBIRD'S ***Druid* and have sent me a very passable map with these tips to accompany it. But am I ever going to know who you are? Hmm? Yep? Ho?**

Certain weapons work better on certain creatures in Druid. For the Ghosts, use water or fire. One hit will usually finish them off. The skeletons don't really like water. One hit with this will kill them. However, if you're using other weapons it will take three hits to finish them off. The Beetle hates fire and one hit with it will add to its hasty demise. Other weapons take three hits to kill it. Snakes also hate fire (three hits for other weapons). The odd Wraith or two have the same dislike of firey substances but as with all the other creatures they take three blasts with any other weapon. Rallacks hate water (one hit) and the Devil (eek) hates electricity (one hit as well). Those nasty Slimies hate fire but take two hits and three of anything else.

To get through the swamps on level three and over large areas of Vampire faces it is much easier to use a Chaos spell. To complete the game you will need as many chests as possible and don't just hare off to the nearest exit. Golem is of greatest use on levels six and eight, but he will follow you from level six into level seven. Get as many keys and Chaos spells as possible. The ratings in the game so you know what to aim for are: Halfwit, Apprentice, Acolyte, Seer, Lore Seekers, Spirit Master, Potion Master and finally the greatest accolade of all, Light Master.




## DRUID TIPS

**Hot from the pen of** Sean Murphy **from Harrow are these tips for the first three levels of *Druid*.**

**LEVEL ONE**

Before you cross the river on the first level it is safe to use water on your enemies. However, after you've crossed it you must use fire because most of your assailants will be beetles. save your Golem for level two because he's needed a bit more here.

**LEVEL TWO**

Open the door with the key and go up and then right. Here you will find a holy pentagram to restore energy. Beware of yellow squares-they are very deadly. Use your Golem right at the beginning of the level so as to save on as much energy as possible because there's a mean section later on . . .

**LEVEL THREE**

Go right and up to the first chest and then go back and do the same but to the left this time. You will see a mass of blue thingummies and *must* use the chaos spell in order to get across it. Once you're across this you will see two more Pentagrams which will very kindly restore your lost energy.

Mr Murphy reckons he's actually got further in the game then his tips suggest, but I think he's bluffing, so lets see the rest of the levels, Sean!

## DRUID CHEAT

**It says on the inlay of *Druid* by** FIREBIRD **that the Golem cannot be controlled manually by a second player. But,** Peter Ellison **from Cheshire has found a way around this.**

Set the control to Kempston and then begin the game. Find a Golem spell and cast it. Pause the game and "A KEY" will be displayed at the top right hand side of the screen. Press "P" and instead, "Joystick" will be printed. Now unpause the game. The Druid can now be controlled with the keys and the Golem can be controlled with the joystick. However, the golem cannot now go onto another level without reversing the proceedure above and getting it to "follow".

## BREAKTHRU BUG

If you've bought *Breakthru* by US Gold then you'll already know about this blatent bug. When the game was loaded up in the CRASH office to be reviewed everyone discovered the bug after about 30 seconds of first playing the game. No-one could believe it when we found out that it wasn't a pre-production copy and was actually a finished game. If you've read the review this issue then you'll be wise to this little gem. When you first start playing the game press the jump key and you'll find that you can leap and sproing through the entire game, even over water and through thin air right to the end and all the nasty men with tanks will have no effect on you whatsoever! You don't score any points, though.

## THANATOS TIPS

Robert Whitcombe **from Hatfield Heath in Essex has sent in some starter tips for Durell's latest CRASH SMASH, *Thanatos*. The game features a nasty dragon who rampages around looking for Virgins to eat and mayhem to wreck on anybody who comes into this path. In case anybody's having severe problems with getting started these tips should come in very handy.**

One of the first hazzards for *Thanatos* to encounter is the creepy cave. Falling rocks must be dodged to help the dragon stay intact. Once out of the cave you can concentrate on hassling the natives. The humans can be picked up and hurled to their death from a great height. Knights can be plucked off their horses and the horses then used to crush them. Great fun! However, the townsfolk

will retaliate by hurling rocks and javelins at *Thanatos*. Green rocks can be plucked from the ground (there is quite a technique to this: fly as low as you can so that Thanatos' paws are actually touching the rocks. He will now pick them up). These rocks can be dropped on the people to kill them.

Next you will come to a stretch of water. Over the water is a door. Stomp up to this and blast away with your firey breath. After a short while the door will disintergrate and you will be able to pass through. Over the next stretch of people you will see a green woman. Avoiding the spears and other nasty objects which are being thrown at you, land and the woman will run up and jump on *Thanatos's* neck.

After more people and a small cave is a section with very large and deadly bees. These are quite tricky to get through. If your dragon's heart is still beating after this buzzing onslaught you'll come to another stretch of water. Fly right to the top of the screen. Don't go downwards or else a big and nasty sea monster will rise up and get yer. Keep going over more bees are more people until you reach a cave full of spiders. If *Thanatos* can manage to land, some white spiders will appear. These can be picked up and dropped. Eugh.

Keep going and when you get to a door half burn it down and at the last moment run back out of the fire and you'll see a girlie tied to a stake. However, a galant knight is on hand to protect her. Follow him and pluck him off his mount and drop him. If you're feeling particularly vindictive you can also pick up his horse and drop that too! Now walk up to the girlie and eat her (how rotten). Your energy will now go up because you've eaten and your tummy is nice and full. Happy tum makes a happy dragon, you know.

Go back to the gate and walk through it. Fly onwards and you'll see a spell book. Land and the girlie on your back will go and get it, but be careful because she can be killed. Keep flying until you see the edge of the castle. Here, a two headed dragon is waiting for you. destroy him and you'll eventually come to a cauldron. And that's as far as Robert's got.

Next issue there may be more tips, but only if anyone's got that far!

## *TRAPDOOR TIPS*

**I don't know what it is about Stoke On Trent, but it certainly seems to be the centre of the Tipping Universe if the number of letters I receive from that part of the world is anything to go by.** Andrew Williams **and** Jaz Bentley **from Stoke have sent me a very pretty and informative booklett all about Berk's trials and tribulations in the game *Trapdoor*. Last month there were some tips on how to get a Can of Worms and Crushed Eyeballs. Anyway mon leetle frenchipoo chefs, thees munth's leetle delicasee for you to saveur is a leetle something called Les Oeufs Saute or as Berk would say, Fried Eggs. Anyway, eneouf of this yolking and oeuf with the tips. Chuckle.**

Put the frying pan onto the stove in room 4 before you start making the can of worms. By the time your Great and Wobbly master asks for them the pan will be nice and hot. Get the bullet from room two and drop it in room three, but not on the trapdoor. Open the trap door and wait until a purple nasty pops its head out. slam it quickly before anything else can come out. Once the Egg Bird has been let loose, put the bullet on the Trap Door and wait until the bird comes close. Then, open the door and up whizzes the bullet, straight up the poor bird's parson's nose (eowch) and watch those eyes bulge.

Shut the trapdoor quickly or the bullet will go plummeting back down it. If you do loose the bullet in this way, fear not according to Andrew and Jarrod, drutt or boni (?) can be used and even worms will work providing your timing is right. Once the bird's eyes start to bulge get the pan and put it underneath the bird. So shocked is the bird at having various objects shot up various private parts of it's anatomy that it will lay an egg in the pan.

Repeat this process until the bird wants to go back down the trap door (don't blame it). Once it's gone put the eggs on the stove. They cook pretty quickly but wait until the pan flashes red. Wait a few seconds before picking it up or else Berk will drop it because it's so hot. Put the pan on the dumb waiter and send it to 'im upstairs to receive a hefty bonus.

To make the Boiled Slimies, go down to the cellar. When you see a pair of eyes pop up out of the water pick then up and a 'orrible slimy body will be attached to them. Drop it in the beaker which should have been fetched from room two and put in the cellar. Repeat the process until four icky, yucky slimies are squirming in your beaker.

Pick up the beaker and go up into room 5 (the room with the weight in it). Go to the far right and pull the lever until the weight is fully

raised you must have dropped the beaker to do this). Pick up the beaker and go into room 4 the one with the stove. Climb the stairs until you reach the top then turn around and tip the slimies into the cauldron below.

Go down the stairs and drop the beaker. Push the cauldron down the stairs to the very bottom of the screen and then position it so that the right hand corner is not past the end of the dumb waiter. The cauldron should now be close to the right hand bottom edge of the screen. Now go into room three and open the trapdoor. if a little green head pops out, leave it open, if not then slam it quickly.

Once the mobile heater is out, close the trap door and go to the side of the cauldron. Wait until the nasty stops turning , then push up and get out of the way of his fire. The cauldron should now start smoking. Repeat the process five or six times then move into room five (where the weight is). Move onto the bottom right hand corner then up the step. The weight should crush the nasty, if not try again. When the little heater is dead (ahh) put the cauldron onto the dumb waiter and send up the boiled slimies to 'im upstairs.

If you're on the super berk level then when you've prepared all the delicasies for 'im upstairs berk must tidy everything up which means chucking everything down the trapdoor. And that's all there is to it!. When he has done this a safe will appear. If the weight is dropped on this it will break open.

## OLLIE AND LISSA POKES

Those Hackers from Haxby and Pocklington **are being really overly industrious this month. Must be all the Christmas spirit floating about (slurp). Anyway, here are some POKEs for *Ollie and Lissa* to go with the tips printed last month. No tips this month I'm afraid, so you'll have to wait until the February issue in the brand, spanking New Year. Cooo.**

```
5 REM OLLIE AND LISSA POKES
10 REM C SMITH J BEAN D
AUSTIN
20 CLEAR 65535
30 LET TOT=0
40 FOR f=50000 TO 50087
50 READ a: LET TOT=TOT+a
60 POKE f,a: NEXT f
70 IF TOT <> 8373 THEN PRINT
"WHOOPS" : STOP
80 PRINT #1; AT 1,7; "START
OLLIE TAPE"
90 RANDOMIZE USR 50000
1000 DATA 205,86,5,221,33
1010 DATA 202,92,17,255,255
1020 DATA 62,255,55,205,86
1030 DATA 5,33,126,195,17
1040 DATA 21,93,1,14,0
1050 DATA 237,176,33,140,195
1060 DATA 17,0,250,1,29
1070 DATA 0,237,176,62,195
1080 DATA 50,42,93,195,247
1090 DATA 92,49,0,0,33
1100 DATA 0,250,229,0,0
1110 DATA 0,0,0,0,0
1120 DATA 33,0,0,175,34
1130 DATA 39,134,34,9,135
1140 DATA 34,219,134,50,41
1150 DATA 134,50,221,134,50
1160 DATA 11,135,49,120,230
1170 DATA 195,176,230
```



## OLLIE AND LISSA CHEAT

**To go with the routine for infinite lives is for *Ollie and Lissa* this issue, here's a cute little cheat for the game. Press PORTCUL after the menu choice and you will find that Ollie can now zoom around the screen like a cute furry animal posessed. This, naturally, makes things a whole lot easier when playing the game. Thanks must go to** Darren Martin **and** Kevin Gale **who live in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.**

## FROST BYTE POKES

The Hackers from Haxby **are certainly prooving to be both Formidable and Industrious. In fact I would almost go as far as saying that they're the hardest working tippers who write to me. But I won't because I'd hate to be called a creep.**
**The Yorkshire Wonders' latest contribution is infinite lives and infinite twang time for** MIKRO-GEN'S ***Frost Byte*. These will come is especially useful for all those lazy people who can't be bothered to use the tips also printed this month. After you, lads . . .**

```
10 REM C SMITH J BEAN D
AUSTIN
20 REM FROST BYTE POKES
30 LET TOT=0
40 FOR f=50000 TO 50080
50 READ a:LET TOT=TOT+a
60 POKE f,a: NEXT f
70 IF TOT <> 9111 THEN PRINT
"ERROR IN DATA": BEEP 1,1:
STOP
80 PRINT #; AT 1,7; "START
FROSTY TAPE"
90 RANDOMIZE USR 50000
1000 DATA 205, 86, 5, 221, 33
1010 DATA 202, 92, 17, 255, 255
1011 DATA 62, 255, 55, 205, 86
1012 DATA 5, 243, 49, 0, 128
1013 DATA 33, 197, 93, 17, 70
1014 DATA 254, 1, 230, 0, 237
1015 DATA 176, 175, 50, 9, 255
1016 DATA 50, 151, 254, 50, 227
1017 DATA 254, 33, 8, 191, 34
1018 DATA 75, 254, 33, 144, 195
1019 DATA 17, 33, 255, 1, 53
1029 DATA 0, 237, 176, 49, 0
1021 DATA 0, 195, 70, 254, 0
1022 DATA 62, 176, 50, 13, 132
1023 DATA 50, 14, 132, 62, 37
1024 DATA 50, 208, 142, 195, 148
1025 DATA 91
```

## LIGHTFORCE TIPS

**Last month I printed some tips to get you through the first two sections of** GARGOYLE'S **latest CRASH SMASH, *Lightforce*. And as promised here's the solution to get you through the Orbital Platforms and the Ice Planet. Once again these tips come from** The Mega Team **from Stoke On Trent because no-one else has sent in any tips for the last two levels of the game. Shame on you! Anyway, thanks lads and off we go again. Don't forget to use the tips from last month as reference or these tips won't make any sence.**

**THE ORBITAL PLATFORMS**
1) Shootable asteroids

2)Alien formation (e)
(i) Stay in the middle as the asteroids subside. Shoot as many of the six as possible and be careful as these aliens will eventually become low enough to hit you
(ii) Same as (b), (i) See alien formation B on the Asteroid belt
(iii) Same as (b), (ii) Asteroid Belt, but move to the left of the screen
(iv) Destroy the descending aliens and move a little further to the left to take out the remaining three aliens as they come down, following the circle, move to the right of the screen immediately
(v) Same as (iv) but move right instead of left
(vi) Same as (i)

3)Unshootable Asteroid

4) Two sets of different homing aliens (use weave technique). When you come to the life locator, shoot the middle two away and continue shooting the homers through the gap as the other platforms get in the way of your missiles if you're not careful.
5) Alien Formation (f)
(i) Move to the left of the screen, shooting. Step up to avoid any stray aliens that reach the bottom-move to the right!
(ii) Same as (e) (v)
(iii) Same as (i) only move to the right instead of the left - move left!
(iv) Same as (ii) but move to the left

6) Shootable aliens

7) Alien Formation (g)
(i) Stay at the bottom, shooting
(ii) Same as above, just inverted left to right

8) Unshootable asteroids

9) Shootable asteroids

10) Alien Formation (h)
(i) Move to middle, shoot as many as you dare, then move to the right and hop up to avoid stray homing aliens

11)Homing spheres

12)Alien Formation (i)
(i) Same as (e)-(i)
(ii) Same as (f)-(i)
(iii) Same as (g)-(i) and move to right!
(iv) Same as (E—)-(v)

13) Shootable asteroids

14) Alien Formation (j)
(i) Same as (g)-(i)
(ii) Same as (e)-(i)
(iii) Same as (h)-(i)

15) Homing Spheres

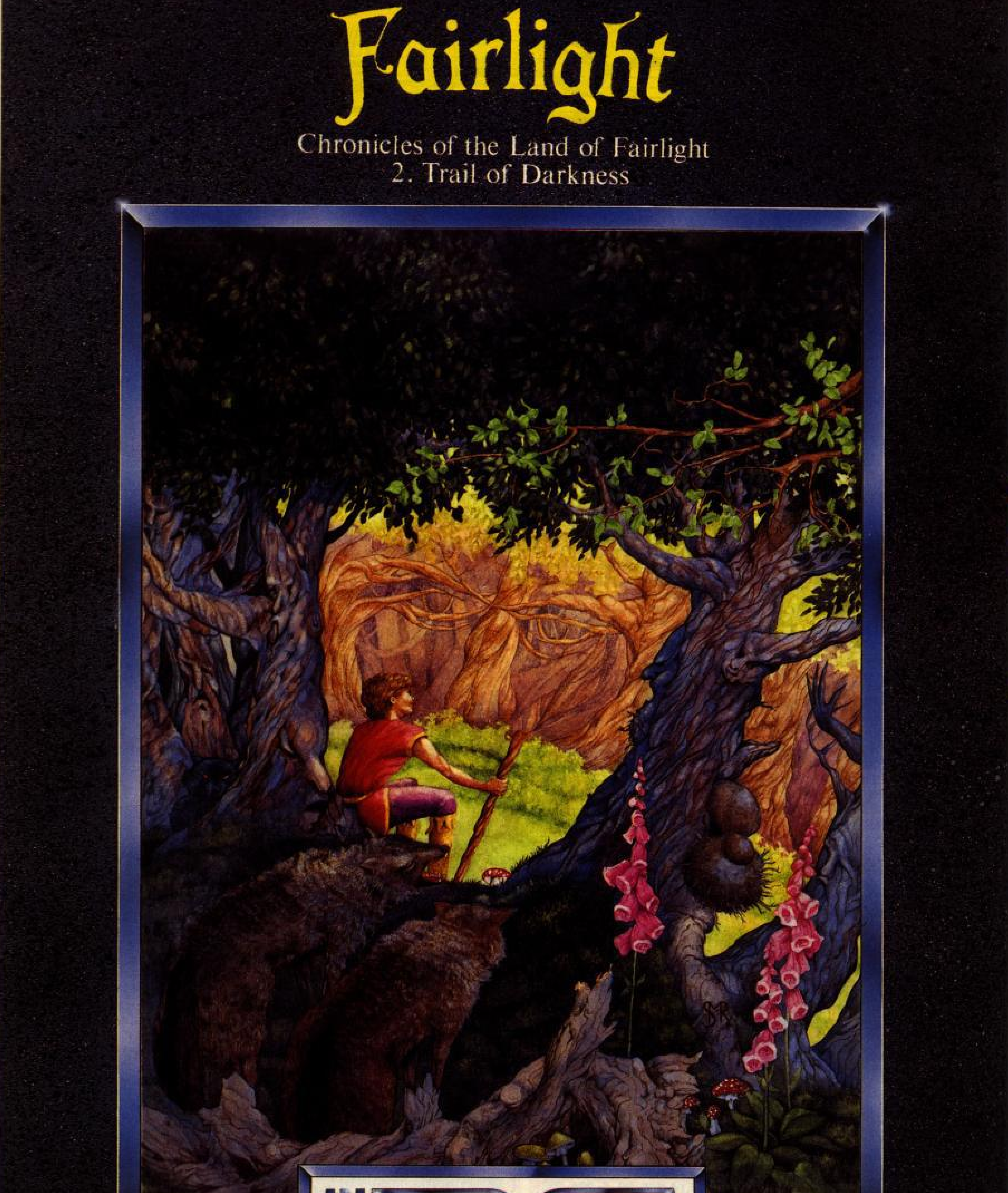
16) Shootable Asteroids

**ICE PLANET**
This is the same as the jungle planet, only with different alien graphics. Use the exactly the same strategies
Generally try to shoot as many of the ground installation as you can. Initially use these tips by using the pause key (u) in between each numbered section.

I notice that C&VG have been kind enough to mention me in their pamphlet again this month. It's the age old story I'm *afraid*. Apparently I don't exist and dear old Melissa does. Hm, hum. Anyway C&VG, as you obviously read my Tips page, you will be pleased to learn that the Doc Martened Publishing Executive and I will be journeying to London and paying a visit to the offices of C&VG to clear this sad matter up once and for all. We will make an appointment to see Ravingdrain and I will personally stick a Girlie Tipster sticker on her furrowed brow if indeed it even exists — along with one of your own Bug Hunter stickers. We'll then claim our prizes for the wackiest use of your stickers.

If, of course, Melissa doesn't exist (yawn) then I will stick the gummy articles on Tim Metcalf's forehead instead. In fact we are prepared to visit C&VG any time at her convenience so anxious are we to meet her! Whenever you're free Melissa, just let us know, it's up to you! So just name the date and we'll be there — tell us which day you're NOT having off in January! Of course there'll be photographic evidence to document our visit which will be printed in CRASH in due course. Eowch! Sorry, just had to pinch myself to make sure I was still here!

That's it. The last Tips of 1986. I hope you will continue to send in your maps, POKEs and tips in the same quantity in 1987. All that remains is for me to wish you a very Merry Christmas and see you in the New Year. Keep those tips pouring in to: HANNAH SMITH (A VERY FESTIVE GIRLIE TIPSTER), CRASH PLAYING TIPS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.




# FAIRLIGHT II: the making of software history... again

# GET YOUR FINGER ON THE BUTTON WITH KONIX!

*Crash Competition*



**20 SPEEDKING JOYSTICKS FOR RUNNERS UP**

## WIN AN OPUS DISK DRIVE AND A PRINTER

KONIX are not a company well known for their fabulous games. This is not overly surprising, as they have made their name by helping everyone to play games and get bigger and better scores with the KONIX joystick range. Now they are celebrating the success of their microswitch joystick — the KONIX *Speedking* — which is shaped to fit the palm of your hand. No more unsightly blisters and throbbing thumbs thanks to its ergonomic lines.

The KONIX stick is one of the best you can buy, so far as I can see. I never get a chance to have anything but the worst in just about everything. Take clothes for example. All the joystick-pumping prannets at the Towers clothe themselves in the latest up-to-the-minute Designer computer-junkie wear — they sport the very latest of T-Shirts complete with Designer logos. Just look at Ben Stone, for instance! The most up to date T-Shirt that I have lurking at the back of my wardrobe is a *Tingah and Tucker* Fan Club shirt that Auntie Mabel gave to me. (She didn't want to wear it herself and give her age away.)

What I could do with is a T-Shirt logo that would be envy of all my friends. Something that I could wear on a shirt around the office — I'd be the only person in the Towers wearing Designer minion clothes . . .

Unfortunately, I have very few ideas myself and not being blessed with the same kind of fashion sense as the other office trendies, I'm going to leave the hard work to you. Design a T-Shirt logo for me, and I might manage to persuade Oli to paint it onto a garment. Then I'd be Mr Fashionable! If your entry sews up the first prize you'll be the proud owner of an OPUS Disk Drive, a printer and your very own KONIX *Speedking* joystick. Twenty runners-up collect a *Speedking* blister-reducing joystick to make game-playing in '87 that much easier on the hands . . .

Put your designs for the ultimate in minionesque wear onto an A4 piece of paper and send it off with the jolly old GPO to arrive here by the 20th of January 1987. Don't forget to put your name and address on the back of your entry and our name and address on the front of the envelope which is:

**TRENDIFY A MINION, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.**




ULTIMATE
PLAY THE GAME
PRESENTS
JETMAN
JOHN RICHARDSON
HAVING ESCAPED FROM HIS CAPTORS, OUR HERO WAS JUS' ABOUT TO LOOK INTO THE FUTURE, THROUGH THE EYE OF OKTUP, WHEN A BIG, HAIRY CLAW DONE TOOK IT...
UMSC...
UMSC...
UMSC...
UMSC...
SNATCH
UMSC...
HO BOY! IS HE UPSET 'BOUT THAT! I BET HE BOILING MAD... I BET HE GOIN' TO EXPLODE WITH ANGER ANY MINUTE 'BOUT NOW...
UMSC...
UMSC...
UMSC...
SHUFFLE SHUF
UMSC...
YUP! I BET HE GOIN' TO ERUPT INTO ACTION ANY OL' SECOND... ANY SECON' NOW, YOU BET... YEP... YOU JUST WATCH..... HAH!
UMSC...
UMSC...
UMSC...
SHUFFLE SHUFFLE
UMSC...
... HE AIN'T GOIN' STAND FOR THAT... NOSSIR... ANY SECOND NOW HE GOIN' GO! YOU BET! YOU JUS' WATCH... YOU'LL SEE.... SHO' NUFF... ANY SEC..
UMSC...
UMSC...
UMSC...
SHUFFLE SHUF
UMSC...
UMSC...
...THAR HE GOES!!
UM SCREAM
SLAM
GENTS
AIEE! ME LOCKED IN THIS SHIP WITH A SHUFFLING ALIEN...! I GOIN' DIE...!
NO, WAIT! AM I NOT A HERO? AM I NOT HUMAN? CAN I NOT USE MY SUPERIOR INTELLEGENCE TO GET ME OUT OF THIS MESS...?
... CAN NOT MY BRAIN DEVISE AN ESCAPE FROM THIS DIRE PREDICAMENT? CAN I NOT THINK MY WAY OUT...?
NO, I CAN'T... SO I'LL HIT IT WITH THIS!
SNAP
GLUB
OH!
UB-
BLUB
LUB
MEANWHILE... OUTSIDE...
HMM...
'WONDER WHERE THE LOONY WENT..?
'WONDER WHAT THE GLASS IS FOR...?
SHUFFLE
SHUFFLE
AH, WELL... OURS NOT TO REASON WHY... TIME TO CLEAN THE BOG!
GENTS
SHIPS CLEANER
SHUFF
SHUFF
SHUFF
AIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...
WOW...'
SPLADOOSH
BOY! WHEN YOU LOONIES GO... YOU SURE DO GO!
WHO YOU? WHASSAGAME? WHY YOU WEARIN' A BIG HAIRY GLOVE..?
OUW!
SPACE-SHIP THIEF!
A FELLER'S GOTTA HAVE SOME FUN! EVEN A LOWLY SHIPS CLEANER LIKE ME...
WIGGLE
WIGGLE
BESIDES... YOU NEED TALK...
Y'MEAN THIS ISN'T MY SHIP?
S'RIGHT...
SCARY, INNIT?
SSSSHH!


WHOES?
EH?
EH? EH?
WHO OWN DIS SHIP?
TELLUS!
CHEAP TOO!
WHO IT?
G'WAN, TELLUS!
WHO?
TELLUS, G'WAN!
FLEX
FLEX
IT!
WAHAA! 'SMY MONSTER! YOU MUST'VE SNUCK ABOARD BEFORE WE TOOK OFF,..BWAH..
AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU OL' BUDDY!
ME GO!
JUS' LIKE OL' TIMES..BWA..
ME AN' YOU 'GOIN' FLY THROUGH THE UNIVERSE TOGETHER, SHARING LIFE'S ADVERSITY, GOIN' WHERE NO MAN HAS GORN BEFORE .. SOB.. WE'LL NEVER BE PUT APART AGAIN...BWAH
PIG!
TRAITOR!
PERVO!
SWINE!
SNIGGER
BRIG
HIPPITTY-SKIP-
HO! LI'L CLEANER...
SHIPS CLEA
CHEF
..YO' IS PROMOTED!
YOU'LL FIND THE VITTLES LOCKED IN THE BRIG...
GO GET 'EM...
YO!
CHEF
REMEMBER, I LIKES MINE WELL DONE!
HAH! I CAN HEAR THAT DOPEY OL' CLEANER COMING!
SHUFFLE SHUFFLE SHUFFL
I'LL BE NICE TO IT AND CATCH IT OFF GUARD... THUMP IT... AN' ESCAPE!
WHY, HELLO AGAIN, YOU OL' HAN'SOME YOU!
HI!
I DON'T SUPPOSE -YOU WOULD ALLOW ME TO PLAY WITH THAT OL' WORTHLESS BAUBLE THAT YOU ST.. ER BORROWED FROM ME..?
SURE...
EVEN A DINNER SHOULD HAVE A LAST WISH!
DEENA? WHAT'S HE ON ABOUT, DEENA?.. WHEN I GET ROUND TO THUMPING THIS DUMBO IT'S GOIN' TO BE A PLEASURE.. BUT FIRST I GOIN' SEE WHAT THE FUTURE HAS IN STORE FOR ME...
NOWT?
BUF
RUB RUB
YUP! THAT'S WHAT IT IS ALRIGHT..... GOSH!

*Crash Competition*

# BANG.. BANG.. SPLOT.. YOU'RE DEAD COMP

## Part II THE SAGA CONTINUES . . .



## 30 Copies of ROGUE TROOPER courtesy of PIRANHA on offer!

A little while ago, PIRANHA sponsored a competition for *Strike Force Cobra* in which readers had the chance to spend a day having fun playing Combat Zone.

Now they've gone and released *Rogue Trooper*, based on the famous character from *2000AD*. You have to fight your way across Nort territory on a quest to collect tapes that will help put your biochip-based comrades, Bagman, Gunnar and Helm, back into bodies. To celebrate the launch of the game that DESIGN DESIGN have been working on for PIRANHA, the delectable Mandy Keyhoe has decided to hire a whole Combat Zone zone for a day in the half-term holidays next Spring.

Now we're recruiting for a Readers' Army to face up to the might (or should that be 'maybe'?) of the NEWSFIELD reviewing platoon. In Combat Zone, you are equipped with special guns and get to wear special protective clothing (including goggles) and the aim is to capture the flag belonging to the opposing team. We're going to be ranging the talents of Penn and Rignall, Spiky Haired Demons from the ZZAP! office (supported by a few other folks from the computer magazines) against a crack squad of readers.

I've had more than enough of the nasty jokes and pranks that everyone in the Towers plays on me, so I'm looking for a couple of champions to wreak revenge for me. This is your chance to deal a painty 'death' to the egos of the reviewers — the guns used in Combat Zone fire paint pellets, and when someone is hit with a splodge of paint they have to lie down doggo and play dead.

Fancy a go? What we want is a recruiting poster for the army that will challenge the Spiky Haired Ones and the Reviewers Army on the appointed day. Go to town on a full-race propaganda campaign if you like, pointing out all the shortcomings of the horrid reviewers who will become 'the enemy' on the day (and are my enemy every day.). Mention their track record of Minion-abusing if you like, or the unrealistic size of their egos. Just make them out to be mean 'n' nasty bunch so that any passing pedestrian would be immediately inspired to do his or her duty and sign up for the conflict.

### THE READERS' ARMY NEEDS YOU

Put your Kitchener type poster on a sheet of paper, no bigger that A4 (which is the size of the page you're reading), and send the finished article to **MINION'S PAINTY REVENGE, CRASH Training Camp, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB**. Entries must arrive before January the 20th 1987.

The best two recruiting posters will win their propaganda artists the chance to participate in the Ego Wars. Thirty runners-up get to collect a complimentary copy of the game, *Rogue Trooper*.

THE·LAST

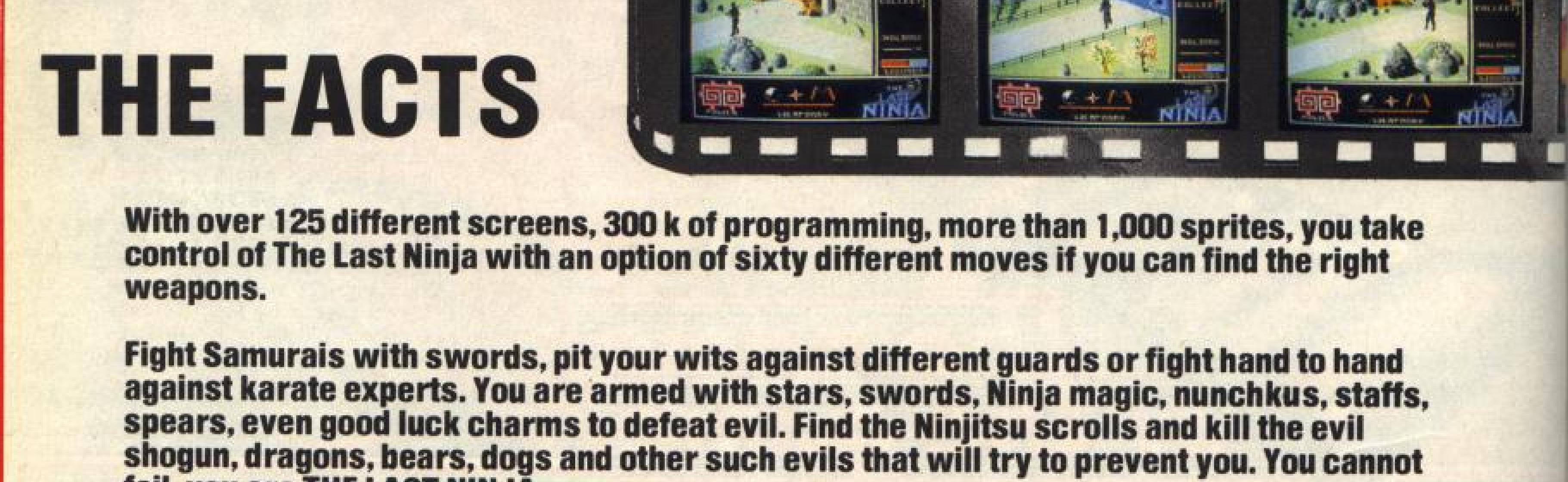
# NINJA



## MORE THAN JUST A FIGHTING GAME

## MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER ADVENTURE

## EXPERIENCE THE STATE OF THE MARTIAL ARTS



# THE FACTS

**With over 125 different screens, 300 k of programming, more than 1,000 sprites, you take control of The Last Ninja with an option of sixty different moves if you can find the right weapons.**

**Fight Samurais with swords, pit your wits against different guards or fight hand to hand against karate experts. You are armed with stars, swords, Ninja magic, nunchkus, staffs, spears, even good luck charms to defeat evil. Find the Ninjitsu scrolls and kill the evil shogun, dragons, bears, dogs and other such evils that will try to prevent you. You cannot fail, you are THE LAST NINJA.**

*Available from Jan 31* on the C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, Atari ST & 800

**SYSTEM 3 – GOING BEYOND THE THRESHOLD**

S Y S T E M 3

**Davis House, 29 Hatton Garden EC1N 8DA. Tel. 01 831 7403, Telex 896691/H675.**

# POWER EXTREME!

## Albums! Books! Games! T-Shirts! Courtesy of ARIOLASOFT ALL Up For Grabs!

Crash Competition




Ever watch CENTURIONS? It's a great cartoon featuring some really mighty heroes who are always romping around saving the day: three clean-living guys and one super fido, dedicated to the defence of Earth. Every Saturday morning alien hordes attack our home planet, and every Saturday morning the Centurions save us all from a fate several times worse than death. Sounds like it'd make a good computer game, doesn't it? Well that's exactly what ARIOLASOFT think — at this very moment they are converting the antics and adventures of the CENTURIONS into a thrilling new game.

In the meantime ARIOLASOFT have decided to donate some goodies, kicking off with an ARIOLASOFT Goodie Bag containing five albums, three books, four ARIOLASOFT games, a CENTURION model and four swell T-Shirts! Mere words alone cannot describe this prize, so take a look at the piccy on this page and gasp away. Twenty five T-Shirts are also on offer for runners up. Interested? Well I'm going to make you work for this one. Here's the competition . . .

Despite the prestigious title of CRASH Editor and the maturity his job as Big Cheese Publishing Executive requires, Mr Kidd is well into CENTURIONS. You should see him run up and down the office shouting 'Power Extreme!', pretending the office dustbin is an alien robot. Biff! Bap! Bop! he goes, laying into the bin with a manic gleam in his eye. A few kicks and a punch later the evil bin is defeated — no longer will it and the rubbish hordes tyrannise the office. The Doc Martened One then pops into the toilet with a smug look on his face . . . to return thirty seconds later in his mild mannered CRASH Editor secret identity.

This is all getting a bit tedious as Mr Kidd's antics do tend to spread rubbish about the place, and though Ol' Doc Marten's CENTURION imitations are entertaining to say the least, we do value his abilities a bit more.

This is where you can help. The plan is to booby trap the office dustbin in some way so as to give Graeme a real shock the next time he tries to do battle with it. It has to be a big shock though — hopefully a big enough shock to curtail his bin bashing career once and for all. Just design a Graeme Kidd frightener that will sit nice and innocently in the bin until attacked. It should burst into scary animation the moment he starts kicking the bin..

Send the design to me. The creator of the best anti-Kidd device will have his or her efforts rewarded with an ARIOLASOFT Goodie Bag. The best of the rest will receive one of the twenty five T-Shirts.

So get cracking and send your entries to **STOP MR DOC MARTEN PRATTING ABOUT, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB** to arrive before the 20th of January 1987. Don't forget to write your T-Shirt size on your entry together with your name and address, so we can send the right size prize if you win . . . entries without a T-Shirt size simply won't be valid!

**Name** ..........................................

**Address** ......................................

.....................................................

...................... **Post Code** ..............

**T SHIRT SIZE (S, M or L)** ............

# TOP THIRTY FOR CHRISTMAS 86



**Nothing very exciting has happened this month as Elite have now got the top four positions with GHOSTS 'N GOBLINS preciding over PAPERBOY, BOMBJACK and COMMANDO from the top dog position. But wait - what's this on the horizon? REBEL STAR RAIDERS from Firebird go straight in at number 13 followed closely by NIGHTMARE RALLY from Ocean in the number 15 slot. Can anyone get to the closely guarded top slot? Perhaps Ocean's GREAT ESCAPE can tunnel in from number 17, or Berk's TRAP DOOR may lead there for Piranah? Only you know because it's your votes that will determine whether they're there at all next month in the CRASH CHARTS.**

***Chris Geggus of Romford will soon be attracting Aunt Aggies attentions as the winner of this month's Hotline Draw. He'll be able to order from Aggie forty quids worth of goodies with which to spoil himself and his Spectrum in the new year. Festive felicitations will also be going to four runners up who will all receive a CRASH Hat and T Shirt via Aggie post and jiffybags. So lucky old you's to Steven Ellis of Cleveland; Adrian Bird of Gwynedd; Julian Scott who's from Kent and finally Robin Ibbeson who is a Yorkshireman.***

The HOTLINE AND ADVENTURE CHART compiled from the votes of CRASH readers is the most realistic chart for gauging the popularity of Spectrum games — it is the games that are being played that get the votes, not the games that are in the shops this week or month.

And the votes are important. It's up to you to let us know what you feel, so fill in the voting forms that live on the Results pages and make your voice heard. Well, make your writing readable — there's no longer a phoneline voting service.

If you don't want to carve up your copy of CRASH, we understand. Use a photocopy if you like, or copy out the details from the voting forms onto a nice clean sheet of paper and send that to us instead.

Apart from the satisfaction of registering your opinion, there's always the chance of winning a rather interesting prize. Once the information has been taken from the forms we receive during the course of the month, ten voting slips are drawn out for special consideration by Auntie Aggie — five from the Adventure Ballot Box and five from the Hotline Ballot Box.

A top prize of £40 worth of software (your choice, not ours) and a CRASH T Shirt is awarded to the first slip out of the draw from the Hotline votes, and another £40 worth of goodies and a Shirt goes to the Hotline Draw winner.

Four runners up from each ballot collect a CRASH T Shirt and a CRASH Hat, so get those votes in to the CRASH HOTLINE and CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.

## Hotline Top 30

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (1) | GHOSTS 'N GOBLINS | ELITE |
| 2 | (2) | PAPERBOY | ELITE |
| 3 | (5) | BOMBJACK | ELITE |
| 4 | (3) | COMMANDO | ELITE |
| 5 | (6) | QUAZATRON | HEWSON |
| 6 | (8) | JACK THE NIPPER | GREMLIN GRAPHICS |
| 7 | (4) | ELITE | FIREBIRD |
| 8 | (16) | LIGHTFORCE | FTL |
| 9 | (11) | DYNAMITE DAN II | MIRRORSOFT |
| 10 | (9) | BATMAN | OCEAN |
| 11 | (7) | MATCHDAY | OCEAN |
| 12 | (10) | GREEN BERET | IMAGINE |
| 13 | (-) | REBEL STAR RAIDERS | FIREBIRD |
| 14 | (12) | BOBBY BEARING | THE EDGE |
| 15 | (-) | NIGHTMARE RALLY | OCEAN |
| 16 | (26) | HEAVY ON THE MAGICK | GARGOYLE GAMES |
| 17 | (-) | THE GREAT ESCAPE | OCEAN |
| 18 | (20) | PING PONG | IMAGINE |
| 19 | (21) | STAINLESS STEEL | MIKRO—GEN |
| 20 | (24) | TRIVIAL PURSUIT | DOMARK |
| 21 | (22) | SPELLBOUND | MASTERTRONIC |
| 22 | (18) | MOVIE | IMAGINE |
| 23 | (17) | DAN DARE | VIRGIN |
| 24 | (25) | EXPLODING FIST | MELBOURNE HOUSE |
| 25 | (-) | TRAP DOOR | PIRANHA |
| 26 | (28) | KNIGHT TYME | MASTERTRONIC |
| 27 | (-) | BACK TO SKOOL | MICROSPHERE |
| 28 | (-) | BOUNDER GREMLIN | GRAPHICS |
| 29 | (-) | URIDIUM | HEWSONS |
| 30 | (-) | TT RACER | DIGITAL INTEGRATION |

## Adventure Top 30

**Well, HEAVY ON THE MAGIC from Gargoyle stays in the number one slot for yet another month but only just**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | (-) | TT RACER | DIGITAL INTEGRATION |

Well, HEAVY ON THE MAGIC from Gargoyle stays in the number one slot for yet another month but only just. Will Mastertronic's KNIGHT TYME take over the adventure throne next month? Or could it be a newcomer that wears the crown? - MASTER OF MAGIC from Mastertronic shows for the first time in the charts at number 11 and a couple of oldies reappear to show that there's life in them yet

KENTILLA written by our very own Derek Brewster shows at number 10 for Mastertronic and the grand daddy of all adventure games DUNGEON ADVENTURE, originally played on mainframe computers by bored programmers, comes into the charts in the 27th slot for LEVEL 9

*This month will see Paul Welford of Castle Lea in Gwent with blisters on his firing finger as he gets to play with £40's worth of freebie software as this month's lucky winner of the Adventure Draw. Well done to him and congratulations are also in order for four other CRASH readers who will soon be looking resplendent in their CRASH Hats and T Shirts. Who are the gang of four who will soon set the computer fashions industry ablaze? Stephen Bressington of Kirkby-in-Ashfield; Paul Devenish who's from Surrey; Robert Keeling from Wheelock where it's very difficult to steal anybody's bike (it's a joke - honest) and finally David Singer, of Cheltenham that's who!*

# the crash CHARTS

## Adventure Top 30

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (1) | HEAVY ON THE MAGIC | GARGOYLE GAMES |
| 2 | (5) | KNIGHT TYME | MASTERTRONIC |
| 3 | (3) | LORDS OF MIDNIGHT | BEYOND |
| 4 | (4) | SPELLBOUND | MASTERTRONIC |
| 5 | (6) | FAIRLIGHT | THE EDGE |
| 6 | (8) | THE HOBBIT | MELBOURNE HOUSE |
| 7 | (11 | PRICE OF MAGIC | LEVEL 9 |
| 8 | (9) | DOOMDARK'S REVENGE | BEYOND |
| 9 | (2) | THE BOGGIT | CRL |
| 10 | (-) | KENTILLA | MASTERTRONIC |
| 11 | (-) | MASTER OF MAGIC | MASTERTRONIC |
| 12 | (18) | REDHAWK | MELBOURNE HOUSE |
| 13 | (16) | SHADOWFIRE | BEYOND |
| 14 | (19) | BORED OF THE RINGS | SILVERSOFT |
| 15 | (17) | REDMOON | GARGOYLE GAMES |
| 16 | (13) | FOURTH PROTOCOL | CENTURY/HUTCHINSON |
| 17 | (-) | WORM IN PARADISE | LEVEL 9 |
| 18 | (12) | DRAGONTORC | HEWSON |
| 19 | (20) | DUN DARACH | GARGOYLE GAMES |
| 20 | (27) | GREMLINS | ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL |
| 21 | (25) | SHERLOCK | MELBOURNE HOUSE |
| 22 | (14) | TIR NA NOG | GARGOYLE GAMES |
| 23 | (—) | FRANKIE | OCEAN |
| 24 | (—) | HAMPSTEAD | MELBOURNE HOUSE |
| 25 | (—) | ROBIN O' THE WOOD | ODIN |
| 26 | (7) | LORD OF THE RINGS | MELBOURNE HOUSE |
| 27 | (—) | DUNGEON ADVENTURE | LEVEL 9 |
| 28 | (21) | SWORDS AND SORCERY | PSS |
| 29 | (26) | MARSPORT | GARGOYLE GAMES |
| 30 | (23) | VALHALLA | LEGEND |







# REVIEWERS CHALLENGE



# THE ZZAP! SCORELORD HAS HIS SAY

For over eighteen cycles I have been orbiting Earth in my Command module, sent to this miserable, pathetic orb of a planet to discover whether indeed its puny organic life-forms are ever likely to show any skill at the art of wielding the joystick.

On my home world, youngsters are trained as Joystick Warriors from an early age, and as their biocircuitry evolves and becomes keener of reflex, the better young apprentices enter the Videodromes to perfect their skills at attaining high scores.

Nearly one and a half of your Earth years ago, I was sent on a mission. A mission that has caused me great pain and physiological damage — damage which is beyond the capabilities of my ship-board mediputer to repair. A mission which required me to discover a member of your pathetic species who was truly worthy of a scholarship to the Videodromes.

I made an error, shortly after arriving in orbit. A minor malfunction in my navigational computer (which is unused to identifying such small hamlets as those inhabited by your species) resulted in my arrival in the offices of a magazine devoted to Commodore 64 games-playing. Having established contact with the backward beings that I encountered in the ZZAP! offices, I set about discovering which of them was the better player of games — and my problems began. The vile ego-centric creature Rignall became my first Earth champion in the time period you refer to as 'May 1985' and since then my monthly attempts to discover other, better Joystick Warriors from the puny population of Earth has continued. Readers of ZZAP! will be familiar with the damage caused to my bio-ROMs and with the suffering I have endured as a result of my endeavours.

The strange, mutiod beings responsible for producing comment on Commodore games have continued building their egos. The ZZAP! chamber is awash with self congratulatory noises as the revolting Spiky Haired demons of Ludlow continue reviewing games. Their Egos have been growing uncontrollably, and they resist further challenges against members of the ZZAP! readership for fear of defeat and public humiliation.

It was time to change this state of affairs.

So confident were the foul ZZAP! duo of Penn and Rignall in their self-appointed roles as games-playing champions of the magazine publishing world, that they suggested they be allowed to pit their skills in a contest with reviewers from the other computer magazines produced in the vicinity. As a time of celebration approaches, which your sentimental race refers to as 'Christmas', I issued the order that the NEWSFIELD REVIEWERS CHALLENGE should be arranged.

The CRASH and AMTIX! staff were commanded to select the prime of their reviewing team to face up to Penn and Rignall. Each of the six reviewers selected a game that runs on their computer, and the contest to discover the most able Joystick Warrior began.

In choosing a game, each reviewer believed that he was attempting to thwart his five opponents by selecting a game that they were unfamiliar with and that he was good at playing. They all believed that I would award six points to the person to gain the highest score in each game, five points to the second highest and so on, and would award an overall championship to the individual with the highest total score.

A foolish assumption. Particularly foolish on the part of the ZZAP! egomaniacs, who know me of old. . . .

Before relating the tale of the challenge itself, let me introduce you to the pathetic specimens who stepped into the arena and tell you a little about the games that they each brought with them:

## JULIAN RIGNALL

A decidedly evil and puny creature whose ego began to grow many years ago when he was awarded a title by an antique computer magazine by the name of C&VG. Since those days when the tiny Rignall first brushed with fame, his body and ego have grown at disproportionate rates. Currently, his ego is large enough to be regarded as a second moon for your planet while his body and musculature are still on a par with a two-week-old Orang u'tang

His choice of game is *Dropzone*, a horizontal scrolling shoot em up, available only on the Commodore.

In essence *Dropzone* resembles an arcade game by the name of *Star Gate* — a sort of enhanced *Defender*. The player controls a man with a jet pack, laser, smart bombs and an inviso cloak that grants temporary immunity to aliens and their weapons.

## GARY PENN

Known as 'Girlie' to ZZAP! readers on account of his Pennchant for dressing up in nighties made for pre-pubescent schoolgirls, as well as for huge, elaborate tonsural sculptures created with the aid of giant economy sized tins of Boots Own Brand hair lacquer, Penn's prime claim to fame amongst his readership is achieved by performing Dangerous Brothers type stunts. So far he has stuffed the entire ZZAP! storecupboard's supply of joysticks down his trousers and eaten four fingers of Kit Kat sideways.

His choice for the Challenge is, again, a Commodore-only game, this time by the name of *Sanxion*. It's a one-way horizontal scrolling shoot em up in which the player zooms through forty increasingly difficult levels shooting anything that moves.




## RICHARD EDDY

Known as 'Dick' to his friends and 'Dick Ed' to his enemies, Mr Eddy is Cornish by birth and upbringing and was prised from the land of clotted cream by the Editor of AMTIX who though he could do with another clot on his team. Since arriving in Ludlow a few of your Earth months ago, the small but imperfectly formed creature has elevated himself to Software Editor status, fallen in love with Berk from *Trapdoor*, and covered his corner of the AMTIX! cellar wall with pictures of Mandy Keyhoe of PIRANHA and Berk of *Trapdoor* in roughly equal quantities.

When pressed to make a choice of game for the contest, Eddy plumped for *Xeno* from ARGUS PRESS SOFTWARE, believing that this *Ballblazer*esque futuresport wasn't due for release on the other two machines before the Challenge was to take place. Sadly, Dick Ed was wrong — this High-Tech Ice Hockey variant in which players aim to knock the puck into their opponent's goal with giant sleds arrived in the CRASH office in good time for the Spectrum reviewers to get some practice in . . .

## MASSIMO VALDUCCI

A Stallion when it comes to playing ELITE's *Scooby Doo*, this Italian was fully aware that the doggy game has been well played in the CRASH office (although unavailable on the Commodore). Mass, as he is known, claimed to be the champion when it comes to playing *Scooby Doo* and based his choice on the probability of an easy six points . . .

A resilient fellow, El Ducci is rumoured to have contacts with the famed Ludlow Mafia and has already used his influence and means of persuasion to arrange for AMTIX! Editor Malcolm Harding to collect him every morning and drive him to work and then chauffeur him home again at the end of the day.

## BEN STONE

A veritable lounge lizard from the tiny and remote Earth dwelling-zone known as Tenbury Wells, Ben Stone has been associated with CRASH for a considerable period of Earth-time. Having completed his studies at a the Tenbury Wells Academy where he specialised in playing the antique arcade machine provided for students' amusement, Ben has entered another training scheme which permits him to lounge around the CRASH office on a semi-permanent basis, supplying comments on games and generally assisting in the writing of the magazine.

The Beau Brummel of Spectrum gaming, Stone invests the majority of his paltry income in his wardrobe and is rarely seen without a set of labels, including Rebok trainers, Lacoste and Fila jumpers and Benetton playsuits. The man who took Posing to Tenbury chose *Cobra* for the Challenge — a game which had only arrived on Microdrive in the CRASH office 48 hours before the appointed day and which had only been seen and played by the CRASH staffers when the Challenge began. The game is a left and right scrolling shoot em up, full of gratuitous violence and eating, loosely based on the film of the same name. . . .

## MICHAEL DUNN

Nicknamed 'Skippy' for a reason that has been lost in the mists of time, Dunn's early claim to fame arrived shortly after he joined the CRASH team as a reviewer. He was chosen to model for the AMTIX! hat and T-shirts advertisement in the arms of a rather strange young lady. An interesting biological specimen, Skippy has the ability to render his entire face, from eyebrow to earlobe, the colour of an over-ripe tomato whenever reference to that girlfriend is made. . . . A man who harbours a number of guilty secrets?

*Full Throttle* was this blushing reviewer's first choice — a motorbike game that appeared over two of your Earth years ago. Dunn no doubt believed that the other reviewers in the Challenge would have long ago forgotten how to play this two-wheeled race game an no doubt expected to be able to romp home to an easy six point lead in at least one event . . .

# LET BATTLE BEGIN......

## Dropzone

Aim: to score as many points as possible in 10 minutes



### RIGNALL

After much wingeing, the Spiky Haired ones from ZZAP! prevail upon the other contestants and are allowed to commence the Challenge with *Dropzone*. Rignall insists on starting, as the game is his choice, he whines. It is one of his all-time binary conquests — a conquest on which he has been building his ego for some time.

The puny one gets off to a shaky start — presumably the thrill of playing with an old flame again — and he narrowly manages to complete the first two levels without losing a life. Suddenly, within the space of ten seconds, Rignall loses two lives — am I to be rewarded with a crushing defeat on the part of one of my archhates so soon?

Sadly, it is not to be. Misery crosses the Rignall face as defeat looms, and spurred on by the inertia of his massive ego he manages to survive, completing his allotted 10 minutes as a score of 154,870 shows on the screen.

### STONE

Dressed to kill, but capable of rescuing scientists? Stone steps forward muttering about having played this game a couple of times, and does his best to prove that this is indeed the case.

He starts off resonably well, expiring at the end of his first game with a score of 14,840 and a fair amount of time remaining in which to improve his status.

In his second game, Ben doesn't lose a life until at least 3 minutes have passed and 28,460 points have been logged on the clock. Unperturbed, he plays on with a maniacal gleam in his eye, expiring gracefully just as the 10-minute klaxon sounds. A creditable 55,080 points are entered into the communiputer's log against Stone's name.

### EDDY

Another *Dropzone* virgin. Another expected failure as far as the ZZAP! rivals are concerned. Richard bravely steps forward to take his place at he joystick and commences play — only to demonstrate his lack of experience by losing his first life after a mere ten seconds. A true hair-trigger performance.

Gathering a little composure under a barrage of verbal abuse and loud hilarity from Penn and Rignall, Eddy presses on, but his first game lasts barely a minute and he collects a paltry 4,580 for his efforts.

Nine minutes remain for him to develop a technique, but Dick manages three more complete games before the time limit expires. He has to be satisfied with an overall personal best of 15,440.

### DUNN

The first of the lambs brought to the Commodore for slaughter in front of the Spiky Haired vile ones. Skippy has not played this game before — so understandably finds it difficult to survive. Within a couple of minutes his first attempt is over, and a score of 9,480 is all he has achieved.

Pressing on, Dunn seems to be a quick learner. His second foray sees him nudge over the 20,000 mark but then he suddenly goes to pieces. A life is lost at 23,780, another at 24,040 and the last remaining incarnation is removed as the clock hits 24,800.

Valiantly, this petite player sporting a red **LM** hat starts again, but is rapidly wiped out after scoring a mere 5,430 points. There is no time remaining in the 10 minute allocation for a fourth attempt. It is yet very early in the Challenge, however . . .

### PENN

Another cocky Commodorian. Penn marches up to the playzone, straddles the chair, oozing selfconfidence and a strong aroma of Boots hairlacquer . . .

Penn's familiarity with the game shows the moment he begins play — within 23 seconds he has gathered up and rescued the eight scientists to complete the first level. He continues to romp through the second and third levels at a rapid pace and I find myself becoming annoyed at this mutoids's arrogance.

Ha! I am quickly pleased — overconfidence combined with the desire to show off causes the worm to lose concentration for a moment, and he loses two lives. He slows down a little, playing more cautiously but nevertheless manages to scrape a huge score of 123,010 in a single game by the time the klaxon goes and his time in front of the Commodore screen is brought to a timely end.

### VALDUCCI

Champing at the bit, Mass throws himself into this totally unfamiliar game like 'a bull at a gate' to borrow an illogical linguistic construction from your Earth language.

Another hair-trigger merchant, El Ducci grimaces, sneers and snarls his way through early failure — taking less than 90 seconds to expire with a score of 6,530.

He fares a little better in the second game, clocking 15,090 before dying — thus forcing his AMTIX! colleague firmly into last place. He continues, attempting to improve his ranking, but despite cramming three more short games into the remaining time, fails to improve his score.

## Scooby Doo

Aim: to score as many points as possible in 10 minutes




### EDDY

This is another of those 'cute' games that seem to attract Dick Ed's attentions — rather like *Trapdoor*. He claims to 'love' playing *Scooby*, and sets to, making strange cooing noises.

This would-be spiky haired reviewer (he gave up emulating Penn when his meagre wages would not cover the enormous cost of hair lacquer and gel) seems competent at this game. He finishes the first level with a score of 8,590 and without the loss of a single life. He continues to complete the second level without death and has 31,450 points to his credit.

El Ducci begins to make threatening noises and starts talking loudly about 'concrete trainers' (whatever they may be) as Dickie passes the 37,000 mark which he celebrates with the loss of a life. Another life is lost as 37,700 appears on the clock and the Stallion whinnies in anger. Another life goes at 38,000 and another at 38,450. The game ends on 38,700 after a little over eight minutes.

Confident with his high score, and apparently oblivious to the dark threats from the Mafiosi, Eddy kisses his *Trapdoor* poster with glee and skips off for a cup of tea, declining to begin another game.

### RIGNALL

Not a total virgin when it comes to this doggy game, Rignall demonstrates the sneaky side of his vile personality the moment he begins play. Rather that attempting to complete levels and rescue his mates, the puny one remains rooted to the spot biffing ghosts to collect points.

Howls of derision echo round the arena and Rignall is forced to make some token effort towards actually playing the game. After 4 minutes of manipulative play, he is on the second level with a score of 21,100 when his lives run out.

Commencing a second game, the odious creature collects a mere 9,800 points before timeout.

### DUNN

Claiming moderate proficiency at the Spectrum version of this game, Dunn begins play and the spectators soon wonder if the Amstrad version is a different platter of Scooby snacks! For a tense half minute he is crowded by ghosts which he has difficulty in keeping at bay and eventually loses a life.

Progressing through the first level with plenty of close shaves, he manages to rescue Thelma and attain a score of 5,000. Collecting three new lives in quick succession, things begin to go well: then disaster strikes. After five minutes of play the game comes to an abrupt end with 19,500 on the clock.

Restarting rapidly, Skippy plays a remarkably similar game and is on the point of rescuing Fred with a score of 19,250 when time runs out for him . . .

### PENN

Aha! This is a game that Penn has not played before. Maybe he is due for his first come-uppance!

Grudgingly, I have to admit that he does rather well. Rescuing Thelma to complete Level One, Penn has lost one life as the second level starts. He begins to get smug. Five lives are lost in the space of a single minute, and the smugness disappears. With one life remaining, he battles on, desperately trying to rescue Fred. I am pleased to see him meet a swift end at the hands of a marauding Jack-in-the-pot.

With a score of 19,240 to his credit, Penn takes a second crack at rescuing Scooby's chums but has little time to improve his score and is left with a score of 11,850 as the ten minutes allocation ends.

### VALDUCCI

A chance to pull back from a previous poor showing. El Ducci settles in front of his favourite game and sets about proving to the assembled throng that he is the Godfather when it comes to *Scooby Doo*.

And he certainly does a good job. Although the first few minutes of play reveal no spectacular skills — the Italian One loses his first life after a minute and a half when 950 points have been amassed — staying power is obviously the Stallion's strong point . . . he continues playing until the time limit is up. He has galloped up to the second level and has a score of 37,050 when time runs out.

### STONE

Mr Label wears a few more microns from the soles of his Reboks as he approaches the joystick and states that he is 'cool' at the game. Mr Cool loses his first life two minutes into the game — towards the end of the first level. In less than a minute, he recovers his composure, cranks his designer score up to 13,150 and completes Level One. Thereafter he loses lives at roughly one minute intervals, steadily building up his score until the last life goes at 9 minutes and 15 seconds with the clock at 33,200.

Evidently a practitioner of the Designer Endgame, this lad: he finishes as close to the expiry of the time limit as he can.

## Full Throttle

Aim: to achieve the shortest time for a three lap circuit of Silverstone




### VALDUCCI

Demanding that he at least be allowed to leap into the saddle of a Moto Guzzi as he hasn't seen this game before, our macho hero screams round the track, remaining firmly in last position for the entire first lap. He moves up to 35th place on the second lap. The third and final lap begins, and Mass finds himself back at the tail end. Some jostling improves his placing temporarily — he reaches 37th place — but manages to regain his tail-end placing in time for the finish line. The race ends after 2 minutes and 43 seconds of dubious riding.

### STONE

Not a designer game, this one, in the opinion of Mr Trendful. Moan, gripe, complain "This is years old." Admitting to having played the game "ages ago", Stone zooms off and completes the first lap in one minute dead, attaining 30th place briefly. On the second circuit he shaves a few seconds off his lap time, crossing the line in 1 minute 53 seconds in last position.

An uneventful final lap sees Ben finish the race in a total time of 2 minutes and 44 seconds — in last place. Not a leader of the pack when it comes to biking. . . .

### RIGNALL

"Har Har" quoth the weedy one, "I played this one back in the good old days before I got a Commodore", and settles down in front of the screen.

A slight problem is encountered on the first corner, which has the Rignall rump in danger of severe damage, but a rapid recovery is made and the noxious creature gets into his stride, attaining 17th place during the first lap. He fares less well on the second lap, dropping to last as he crosses the finishing line for the second time. A minor recovery takes place in the final lap and Rignall takes the chequered flag with a time of 2 minutes 40 seconds.

### DUNN

Clearly this is Skippy's game. He proves to be rather good at it, burning round the track and gaining first position with ease. He suffers a collision during the first lap, but isn't penalised too badly in the event, crossing the winning line with a time of 2 minutes 30 seconds, 12 seconds ahead of the first of the computer controlled bikers.

Strange, I would have expected the ZZAP! Dirty Tricks Department to have swung into distraction action with loud references to Skippy's girlfriend, but they remained silent. Odd. Most odd indeed . . .

### EDDY

There's nothing cute or cuddly about motorbikes, and seeing as the Cornish Clot hasn't played this game before, no-one in the arena seems to believe that the AMTIX! Accolader is going to fare very well.

Gripping the joystick as if it was a handlebar is not the brightest way to play the game, the assembled throng points out, and eventually Dick Ed stops living up to his name and sets out on the gruelling ride. He gets off to a decidedly shaky start, weaving all over the track, and is soon miles behind all the other riders. Even with no other riders in sight, the Cornish Pixie seems to be suffering from clotted reflexes and has severe difficulty remaining on the track..

Eventually he catches up. He keeps nudging other bikes repeatedly yet manages to make his way to 33rd place at one stage during the second lap. Disaster strikes: he hits several bikes, falls into last place and drags over the line in a time of 2 minutes 42 seconds — a surprisingly good time, given his riding abilities.

### PENN

More moaning: "It's like a poor man's *Super Cycle*". Winge, complain. No doubt the wide-jawed, joystick-trousered one is suffering from a lack of hairspray, for his morale seems to be drooping a little, along with his strangely coiffed hair. "The flickering bikes are putting me off", he winges, bumping his way around the track.

An uninspiring ride from such a self-proclaimed game player — high spot of the three laps is the brief moment when Penn squeaks into 36th place, but he manages to finish 39th in 2 minutes 41 seconds. A fairly close matched ride all round, with Skippy justifying his personal choice by a comfortable margin.

## Sanxion

Aim: to score as many points as possible in 10 minutes



### STONE

More designer complaining from the Effete One. His first game lasts a little over two minutes in which Ben claws his way to a score of 6,480. Apparently he has played this game a little, but from his performance he might as well not have bothered . . .

Game Two gets off to a slightly better start — 10,580 points are on the clock when the first life goes, but then the second, third and fourth lives are all lost on the walls and no extra points are gained! Wasteful playing, indeed.

After a couple of hundred seconds, Wave One has been negotiated and the score pushed up to 11,380. When he finally expires — with 3 minutes playtime available to him, Stone throws in the towel and gives up. Pusillanimous play indeed.

### EDDY

The soft, wimpy Eddy likes *Sanxion*. The soft, wimpy Eddy rapidly proves he's not very good at playing *Sanxion*. Three games are played in a little over three minutes and 2,700 is the highest score reached.

Game four gets off to a slightly better start — only two crashes in the first 30 seconds — but before long D-Ed is having problems again, flying slowly, shooting slowly and bumping into things. What this Cornish Patsie needs is something big and colourful and girlie like *Trapdoor*. I despair of him.

Oh rarity! He has managed to squeeze onto the second level. No bonus achieved in the transition, though. A bomb puts paid to his run for glory at 7,640 points.

Starting out again with less than four minutes remaining, he negotiates the first level successfully, running into a bomb once but otherwise managing a clear run. Entering the bonus level with 2,950 the cutie starts the second level with 4,765 points and starts having a hard time again. Somehow he survives — and almost begins to shine, but crashes into the first set of barriers at the end of the level with 9 minutes 15 seconds elapsed and 8,910 points on the clock.

### VALDUCCI

A manic style of play characterises El Ducci's attempts at *Sanxion* — a game he admits to having attempted on a couple of occasions. His first game lasts a mere 47 seconds and yields 1,650 points. Second time around he lasts 4 seconds longer, but still comes out with 1,650 points. Cunningly consistent if a little short and sweet! Manic stabs of the fire button combined with rather slow reactions don't help . . .

Slowing down a bit from the premature ejection style of missile hurling, the Stallion takes his third game a bit more steadily, survives the first level and progresses carefully until his last life is removed by a collision with a barrier at 9,000 points.

Another quick game sees him enter the second level and survive long enough to collect 7,400 points — performance he repeats once more, crashing just as the klaxon sounds and 5,960 have been collected.

Stacatto stabs combined with staying power seems to be the gaming style adopted by the Italian Stallion in all but *Scooby Doo.*

### PENN

Slithering into the hotseat, collecting the joystick coolly and starting play, Penn takes to *Sanxion* like an Umbertian swamp slug to a rippling pool of slime. It is a sickening sight, watching him play casually and almost competently. He has nearly made it to the end of the third stage and collected over 28,000 points before he loses the first life of the game, a mere 3 minutes 42 seconds after starting. Two minutes and another 13,000 points elapse before the second loss of life — but it only takes another 7 seconds for the Mohican Monster to die again, I note with some satisfaction.

A tricky moment follows around the 49,000 mark and Penn opts to commit suicide when confronted with the Mother Ship. One minute remains as he enters the last bonus screen and Bonus Level 5 looms nigh. 'Girlie' commences Level 6 with 71,770, and six seconds before timeout he loses a life, achieving a score of 73,070.

Unable to resist an opportunity to demonstrate the sheer size of his ego, the revolting creature continues to play while all around him yawn with boredom. The arrogant fellow finally leaves the computer with a large, smug grin spread across his large, smug mouth and 124,500 on the clock. . . .

### DUNN

It's all new to him. Looking particularly frail and Rignallesque behind his specs, Skippy plonks himself down behind a Commodoreful of *Sanxion* and prepares to do his best at a game he has just seen played for the first time.

His first attempt lasts almost 30 seconds, and before the 90 second mark is up, two more games have taken place. The Blushing One's third game begins to look a little more promising as he blasts his way through to the second level. It looks like a probable personal best for the Nervous Creature as he expires on the barriers at the end of the second level with a score of 10,620 points.

And indeed, that it exactly what it proves to be — a further three short games fail to yield significant scores as the 10 minute limit ends.

### RIGNALL

Rignall must sense defeat, for he begins a litany of moans covering a range of subjects to do with not liking the game, not having had the chance to practice enough, and hardly having time to pilot a Sanxion Fighter long enough to get used to the controls. All this, despite hours playing the game when it came in for review. Ha! he will lose to Penn, that is for sure.

He starts badly, losing a life after 20 seconds. Thus un-nerved, he only just makes it to the second level. The small Spiky creature copes with the third level with manic precision and enters the fourth level with 35,380 points to his credit. At the start of level five, he gets a little over-confident and loses two lives in quick succession. Two more lives disappear before the Mother Ship is encountered and disposed of.

The defence barriers at the end of the fifth level prove a major problem. After severe effort, which appears to raise strange bruises on the thorax of this spindly being, Rignall fails to avoid death and ends the game with a

score of 43,990. Only 90 seconds remain, so it is clearly not worth continuing with a second game.

## Xeno

**Aim: the best score from two games played on Average Skill level is used. Each game consists of four minute-long quarters**




### EDDY

The Cornish Piskie believed that *Xeno* would only be available on the Amstrad by the time my Challenge took place — and his decision to include it in the AMTIX! portfolio of games was clearly influenced by this factor. The diminutive one is overtaken by events, however, and the game arrives in the CRASH office in good time for Stone and Dunn to get plenty of practice.

This news is broken to him just as he starts to play, and somewhat petulantly, he commences. Clearly, the foolish fellow is un-nerved by the news. He fails to score in the 1st quarter and it ends 0-0. The computer score 16 seconds into the 2nd quarter and shortly thereafter Dick Ed pulls back to 1-1. Plenty of active play ensues and just before the 2nd quarter ends Dickie is about to shoot and. . . . the quarter ends. Not his day, it seems!

He concedes another goal early in the 3rd quarter, but manages to pull back to a 2-2 draw by the end of the rather uneventful game. If this is the best the lad can do, needlework might have been a better choice of occupation . . .

The Cornish Clot's next game goes rather better — he maintains the edge over the computer, scoring early in the 1st quarter and after about 20 seconds in the 2nd quarter. As the 4th quarter starts, Dickie is winning 3-0, and is beginning to look pleased with himself. Pride always comes before a fall, according to one of your Earth Interjections, and the case is proved yet again. A mere 9 seconds before the end of the game, the computer scores and Dickie is left with a best score of 3-1. He appears less than pleased. . . .

### DUNN

Maybe Eddy was put off by the fact that the CRASH team were gloating about all the practice they had been able to put in. Now is the time for the pudding to be proved by consumption — to paraphrase another of your strange linguistic constructions.

My Pleasure Circuits thrill as Dunn begins to lose. By the end of the 1st quarter the computer leads 4-0, a lead it expands to 5-0 by the end of the 2nd quarter and to 7-0 by the end of the 3rd. At the end of Game One the blushing Spectrum-wielder is 8-0 down to the computer. I have not had so much pleasure watching a Challenger play a game since my Mission began, and I sense my Pleasure Circuit overload fuses warming for the first time in eons. . . . What can Skippy do to amuse me in the second game?

His second session starts rather better. In the 1st quarter the computer only succeeds in scoring one goal. My Pleasure Circuit fuses cool a little. During the second quarter the computer hammers two more goals home, and in the third quarter scores three. The final quarter begins with Skippy a gentle shade of pink and the computer 6-0 in the lead. It ends with a 7-0 defeat and a rather more intense shade of pink reflecting off the monitor screen . . .

### VALDUCCI

The manic technique comes to the fore again. I have little desire to report on the Stallion's performance here. Suffice to say he wins his first game 7-0 and then goes on to perform like an agitated rabbit running away from myxamatosis, ending up exhausted with a lead of 14 goals to 0. I am displeased.

### STONE

My early pleasure in observing the computer win at *Xeno* looks set to be ruined. Stone has decided that this game is a game for posers such as he, and fights the computer every inch of the way. He wins the first match, 6-2. Spurred on, he manages to play even more designer shots in his second match, and concludes with an 11-1 lead. May the kangaroo skin on his trainers moulder . . .

### RIGNALL

Strange indeed. Rignall has never played this before. Yet the puny one desists from the usual defensive barrage of whining that usually forms a part of his binary foreplay if he feels in the slightest danger of doing less than well. I am bemused.

Aha! He has been studying the gameplay of his opponents and has worked out a sneaky way of scoring goals against the computer. He plays an underhand match, and as a result I find myself having to cope with Rignall's 15-0 lead at the end of the first game.

In the 1st quarter it becomes apparent that the sneaky mode of play is not infallible — the wimp only scores two goals. In the second quarter he fails to score and gets stuck on the elastic so gives up in disgust. . . . There's nothing worse than a cheat cheated!

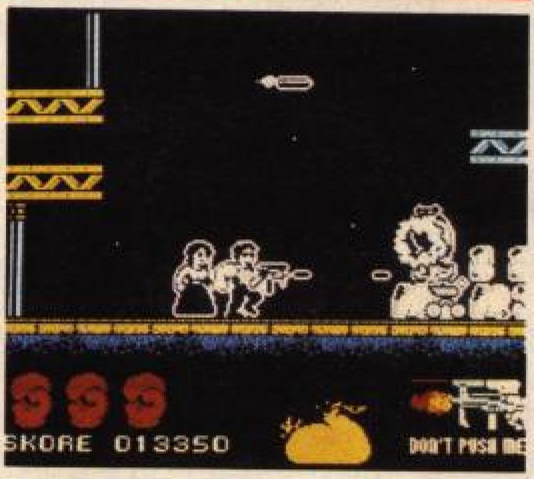
### PENN

Another *Xeno* virgin, Penn appears strangely confident, too. What is going on in the spiky minds of these Commodorians?

He beats the computer 3-2 in his first match. To my eternal disgust, he does rather better in his second game, winning 4-0. See how easily pleasure turns to pain — I was overjoyed in the early stages of this section of the contest, and now find myself suffused with frustrated anger. Those who I least wanted to do well have given a creditable account of themselves . . .

## Cobra

**Aim: to score as many points as possible in 10 minutes**




### DUNN

This is supposedly the trump card in the CRASH armoury — only Dunn and Stone have seen it before this moment. Once more, Dunn seems unable to capitalise on an advantage. Within 90 seconds his first session has ended with a paltry score of 6,300. His second effort lasts a little over a minute, but his score improves to 17,000. Four minutes or so after restarting yet again, he has amassed a score of 36,950 and ends the game. HA!

Desperately trying to avoid blushing, Skippy rapidly starts his fourth game — and runs out of time with 44,400 on the clock.

### RIGNALL

The unpleasant creature desists from moaning yet again. I fear the worst. He starts off, collects a pistol almost immediately but then loses the pistol and a life in quick succession. Next, he finds a machine gun and starts to massacre everything in sight — his score has crept up to 30,550 before both gun and life are lost. I am aggrieved.

Invincibility comes to his on-screen persona in a hamburger, but it soon wears off; he is stunned by a pram and loses a life. At the end of Level One the score is 43,550. Seconds later, the pasty-faced mutoid loses his remaining lives and ends up with an overall score of 44,050.

Three short and pathetic attempts follow with Rignall deliberately ending one of them to start again. Nearly 5 minutes remain on the clock as the fourth game begins. Rignall does passably well, moving on to Level Two with 30,000 points and his score creeps up. With less than a minute remaining, he is killed of totally and 41,650 shows on the the clock.

### VALDUCCI

After 90 seconds the Italian Stallion has finished his first dose of crimebusting. It seems to be over very quickly for him. His second game takes 99 seconds, his third 47 seconds, his fourth 69 seconds and his fifth bash lasts all of 63 seconds. Top score so far: 8,700 achieved on the first attempt. Strange, given that he and Mr Stallone share the same national origins. . . .

Less than four minutes remain — time for another trio of tries at least, all no doubt pathetically low-scoring. I am amused by the inept attempts of this 'tough guy' to score points by on-screen killing. Maybe in real life, this baby Mafiosi is, as your strange Earth language would have it, "all mouth and trousers".

Things do not look well — he is shot, stabbed and shot again early into the next go, but soon Mass begins mass executions with a machine gun. Points build up at an alarming rate, and the clock registers over 20,000 . . . At last the Italian one has found his form, to my dismay. The Stallone-emulation attempts end at the hands of a bazooka-wielding granny with a score of 24,050 after 9 minutes 18 seconds of play.

### EDDY

Another bad start. Dead after 53 seconds with 4,450 points on the clock. In Dick Ed's second game, he manages to get the machine gun and begins an orgy of mindless slaughter. Soon the would-be Spiky Haired One has amassed 25,150 points and become temporarily invincible. Death follows quite rapidly, however, as his score hits 28,600. Six puny games follow before timeout, in which the best score the foolish fellow can create is 8,300

### STONE

A piece of Designer Programming, this, to judge by Ben's desire to play *Cobra*. He claims, loudly, that he is good when it comes to mindless violence. His skill is displayed to all in his first attempt: Stone gathers no moss and hardly any points, being wiped out with 4,150 points to his credit. How are the mighty claims defused!

His second game has all the hallmarks of an AMTIX! reviewer, too — 3,900 points before expiry.

Clearly worried, a large amount of effort goes into the next Stone attempt. Casting caution to the wind and risking the addition of unbecoming sweat stains to his expensive garments, Stone cusses and swears his way to 42,250 points. There is plenty of time remaining in the 10 minute allocation, but Stone reverts to the EDDY/VALDUCCI style of gameplay once more. . . .

### PENN

Ha! Incompetence shows through. Penn has never played this game before, a fact he demonstrates with elegant simplicity by ending his first game with a massive score of 650 points. I feel I am about to have my Pleasure Circuits stimulated once more.

Strangely, this wide-mouthed creature finds his feet with his second game, achieving a score of 31,400 at the end of the Level One and progresses to clock up a massive score of 65,600 before expiring. A large allocation of time remains, but the smugness takes over and Penn merely toys with a couple of short games to amuse himself before vacating the joystick. And on that unhappy note, the last Challenge game has been played. It is time to compile the scores and analyse the results . . .

# THE SCORES

My Communiputer had been supplied with the final scores of each game played by the contestants, and almost as soon as Penn had completed his *Cobra* run a full printout of the scores in tabular form was spewing from my portable console. It was snatched up by the assembled throng who insisted on allocating 6 points for the winner in each event, 5 points to the next highest scorer and so one. Their puny mathematical abilities kept them busy for quite a while while I performed my own calculations on the data shown here. . . .



**Girlie Penn bangs his head on the desk in frustration as the slightly bruised Rignall streaks ahead in DROPZONE.**
**Could Rignall's collars be a mite tight — that might explain the contusions. . . .**

## Initial Results Analysis

| | Dropzone | Sanxion | Xeno | Scooby Doo | Cobra | Full Throttle |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RIGNALL | 154,870 | 43,990 | 15-0 | 21,100 | 44,050 | 2:40 |
| PENN | 123,010 | 73,070 | 4-0 | 19,240 | 65,600 | 2:41 |
| STONE | 55,080 | 15,360 | 11-1 | 33,200 | 42,250 | 2:44 |
| DUNN | 24,800 | 10,620 | 0-7 | 19,500 | 44,400 | 2:30 |
| VALDUCCI | 15,470 | 9,000 | 14-0 | 37,050 | 24,050 | 2:43 |
| EDDY | 15,440 | 8,910 | 3-1 | 38,700 | 28,600 | 2:42 |

The sound of falling dandruff dominated the arena as six heads were scratched and fingers counted — an amusing sight to behold. Little did the sextet realise that my calculations had already been performed. Each reviewer had played in pursuit of personal glory. Each reviewer was keen to discover the overall ranking he had achieved according to the system I had allowed them to believe was to be operated.

Groans suddenly erupted as the result of their primitive calculations appeared. Rignall's smile was so wide that it seemed the bruising on his neck, contracted before the arena was entered on account of some mysterious practice, became even worse. He thought he was the NEWSFIELD Champion!

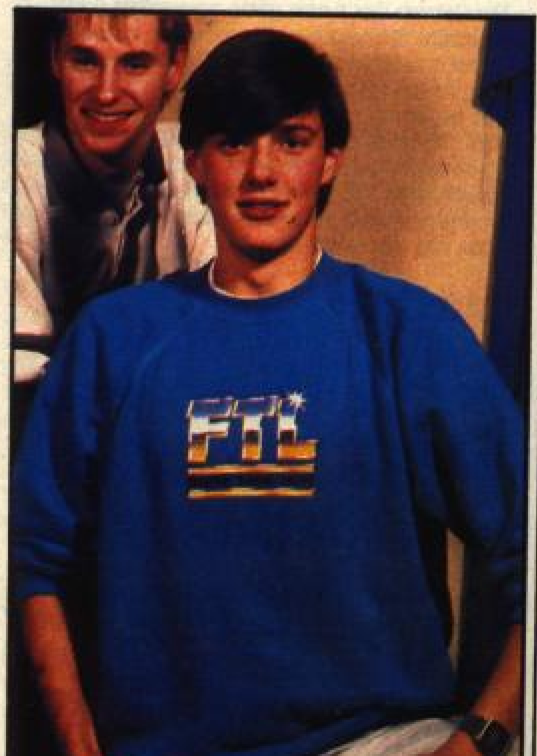
Not so, not so. For I had decided that the scoring system was inappropriate. As this was a challenge between the reviewing teams from the three magazines, it is foolish in the extreme to allow games played on the 'home' machine to count into individual's scores. Thus Rignall and Penn are deprived of their points for *Dropzone* and *Sanxion*; Valducci and Eddy deprived of their *Scooby Doo* and *Xeno* points and Stone and Dunn do not get credit for playing *Cobra* and *Full Throttle*.

# THE FINAL OUTCOME:

So the scoreboard for the NEWSFIELD CHALLENGE, carrying 'away' games only is as follows. . . .

| | Dropzone | Sanxion | Xeno | Scooby Doo | Cobra | Full Throttle |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RIGNALL | — | — | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| PENN | — | — | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| STONE | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | — | — |
| DUNN | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | — | — |
| VALDUCCI | 2 | 2 | — | — | 1 | 1 |
| EDDY | 1 | 1 | — | — | 2 | 2 |

**Heap Trendy. The man who came top poses in athletic style**




# THE OVERALL CHAMPION

Without doubt, it is Stone who deserves the Accolade, Smash or Sizzler crown as overall champion, not the revolting Rignall. For Stone gains maximum points on 'away' games three times — on *Dropzone*, *Sanxion* and *Scooby Doo*, while Rignall only gains two overall victories on 'away' games: *Xeno* and *Full Throttle*. Rignall begins to sulk as I announce the full results — his ego is apparently more bruised than his neck, which bears strange contusions as the results of some strange pass-time the spindly one indulges in regularly.

Overall, the ranking based on 'away' points is as follows:

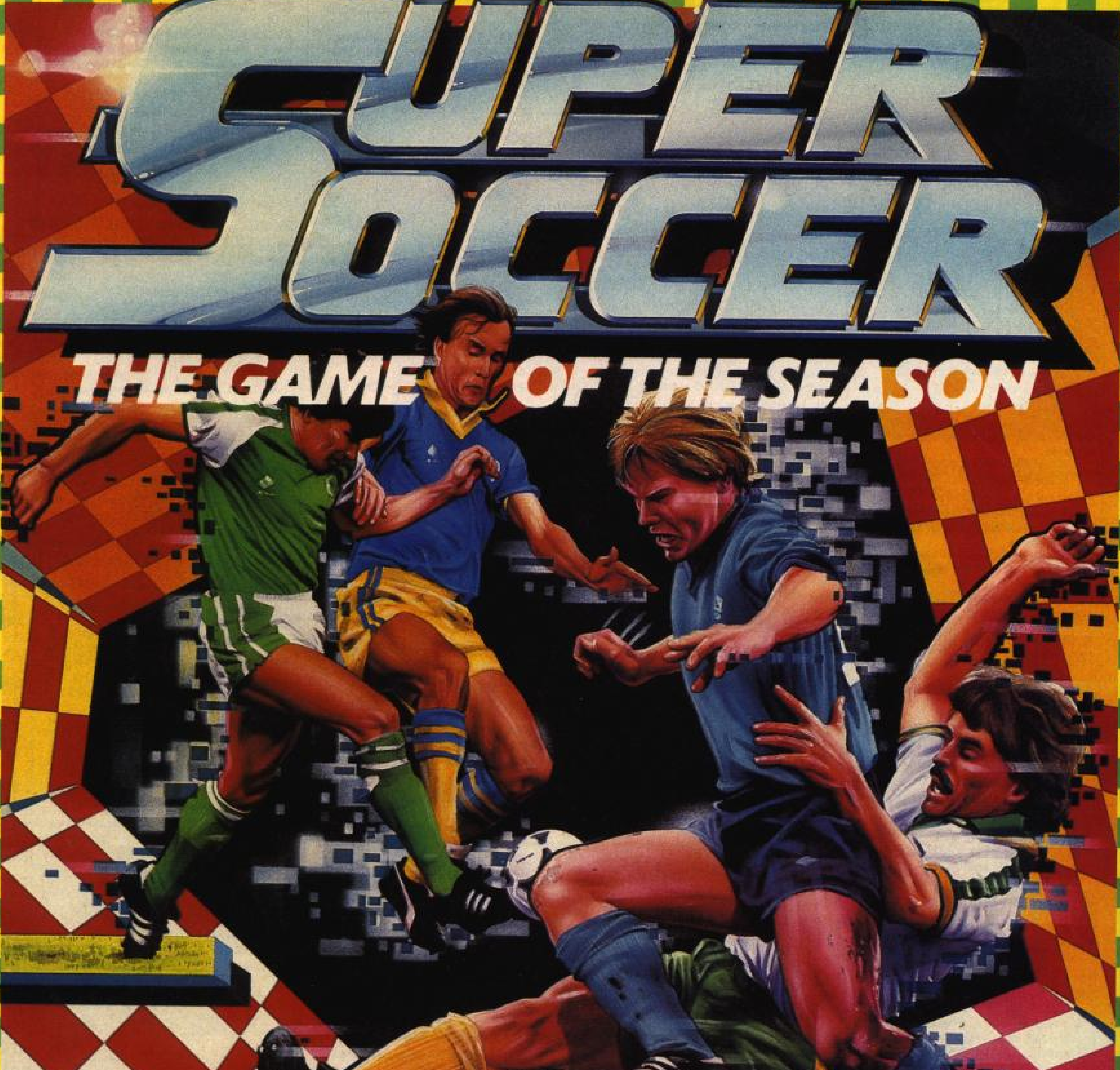
**STONE** .................................................. **15**
RIGNALL .................................................. 14
PENN .................................................. 10
DUNN .................................................. 9
VALDUCCI .................................................. 6
EDDY .................................................. 6

Clearly, Stone is *Victor Ludorem* — the contestant with the highest score and the most 'away' wins to his credit.

On a team basis, ZZAP! and CRASH, as befits the senior magazines in the NEWSFIELD stable, come out best — joint leaders with 24 points collected by their reviewers. Both the ZZAP! and CRASH teams collected 3 away wins, 3 away 2nd places, 1 away 3rd place and 1 away 4th place. The AMTIX! teamsters trail hopelessly, with a total of 12 points between them and 4 away 3rd placings and 4 away last placings.

The final words must go to Richard 'Dick' Eddy, explaining his magazine's loss of honour: "I just don't play games — that's all there is to it!". Unless, of course, they are cute and cuddly games featuring large, cute, colourful creatures. Pah! He makes my lubricant filters clog . . .








*Steve, Karen and Kenny peer over the bannisters at the CANVAS HQ — one of their regular haunts. . . .*



*Steve, Karen and Kenny peer over the bannisters at the CAN VAS HQ — one of their regular haunts. . .*

# ART FOR ART'S SAKE . . . MONEY FOR GOD'S SAKE?

**When the original IMAGINE bubble burst back in the summer of '84 the company's employees became redundant overnight. From the ashes and confusion rose a phoenix, DENTON DESIGNS, a programmer's co-operative set up by Ally Noble, Steve Cain, Graham 'Kenny' Everitt, John Gibson and Karen Davies — essentially, the team which worked on IMAGINE's ill-fated 'mega-game'. The company produced a number of innovative games, including *Shadowfire* and *Frankie Goes to Hollywood*, and quickly earned a reputation for original, high quality software.**

**Early this year the jungle drums of the software industry beat out a rumour: the DENTON DESIGN team was breaking up. Apparently, the founder members had peeled away from the company to pursue their own interests. So what did happen to DENTONS? Julian Rignall travelled to Liverpool to find out what went on, and what's going on . . . original programs are getting a bit scarce nowadays — licences seem to have taken over.**

The first port of call was the offices of DENTON DESIGNS, situated in the heart of Liverpool's equivalent to Harley Street. Although only one founder member remains, graphic artist Ally Noble, the new DENTONS is still very much a co-operative consisting of six people: Ally, John Heap, Andy Heap, Stewart Fotheringham, Dave Colclough and Colin Parrott. The company is alive and kicking. So what happened during the so-called split?

'The directors, Steve Cain, Karen Davies and John Gibson all wanted to go freelance', Ally Noble explains. 'They didn't really want to work with the company, but wanted to work for themselves. At the time it looked as though everyone was going to pack in and give up, but we decided not to'.

John Heap takes over the story, 'I think they were a little disillusioned with the amount of profit actually going into their pockets and they reckoned they could get twice their wages if they went freelance, which I think is true. After they left there were rumours saying that the DENTON DESIGNS team had split up, so we sent out lots of letters dispelling the rumours that DENTONS had died. We were back in business within a week.'

Which rather implies that the people who remained behind are less money orientated and, perhaps, see games designing more as a labour of love . . .

Ally points out their philosophy 'if we wanted more money we'd all go freelance and drive around in our Porsches.' John chips in: 'I think you really have to commit yourself, especially when you consider how much time you actually put into the game. When you weigh the effort against the money it's really just a pittance that we earn.'

DENTON DESIGNS is a name that has become associated with original material — a reputation the new team intends to build on as Ally explains: 'we see ourselves as people who are here to do our own stuff and not things like conversions.' John continues: 'when you're working on a game the idea for the next one starts forming in your head . . .' Ally agrees, 'yeah, and then it gets bounced around the office. The idea for *Bounces* came out of *Frankie*. I think the whole thing is a sort of progression.'

John is currently doing a lot of ▶

background reading into a game set in Ancient Egypt. 'We tend to do a lot of research into our games. You get more into it if you do.' Ally says, 'for the *Great Escape* I watched the Colditz series and went out and bought a load of military models.'

## RACING A MINI

It's all very well coming up with brilliant game designs, but surely the sheer volume and complexity of ideas must be limited by the target machine's capabilities? Spectrum programmer John shrugs his shoulders, 'it's a bit like racing a Mini instead of a Porsche. You can only go so fast but you can become better at driving the Mini than you are at driving the Porsche. You can get just as much fun out of driving the Mini fast as you can driving the Porsche faster. . . .

'I'd like to do a 128K game,' he admits 'not just more screens, but I'd like to push it like you push a 48K Spectrum. It's the same processor and same machine it's just the graphics potential is much bigger — bigger sprites and map size. It's really sad at the end of a 48K game where you want to put in a few extra little tricks but you haven't got the memory.'

Ian, a Commodore programmer, joins in. 'With the C64 it's a case of finding new tricks you can do with the machine, but it is annoying to have to throw out ideas because you can't get the machine to do them.' Stewart Fotheringham, another Commodore specialist, agrees: 'the big problem with the 64 is the actual speed of the processor.'

John laughs. 'If you look at the Commodore you have sprites and all that and you think 'what am I going to do with them'. On the Spectrum you have none of those, so the actual thought about how the machine is to be used is much more diverse — you get things like *Knight Lore*. If the Spectrum had died a death and the Commodore was reigning supreme I don't think you'd ever get anything like *Knight Lore* games.'

John mentions *Knight Lore* with a certain amount of respect. Do the DENTON members pay attention to other games on the market? John: 'Not much really, we're not really games players. We're a bit insular really.' Ally takes over: 'we went to the PCW Show and there was nothing which really impressed us. Oh, the title screen on *Alleykat*, that was nice.'

In response to the question 'which DENTON game were you least pleased with?, Ally instantly retorts 'definitely *Transformers* . . . it's really a personal thing, we all like different products, but I think *Transformers* was an embarrassment'. 'We were a bit over a barrel and we had to do it.' John admits, 'There wasn't much you could do with the subject matter of the program . . . we did our best.' Nobody says anything about *Roland Rat*. . . .

So why don't the DENTON team launch a label in their own right to avoid *Transformers* type problems? Ally shakes her head . . .



**The new DENTON crew — after risking life and limb to get through a ruined church and pose against a mausoleum. . . .**



**Everyone who was in the CANVAS offices at the time crowded round Kenny's STAR TREK demo on the Atari ST ▶**

'We don't know anything about marketing,' John says. It boils down to money: 'there's also a problem with cash flow — we wouldn't get any money for six months, and we'd have to pay people in the meantime. We may do something like that in the future with one game perhaps being financed by another company. We don't really know all the tricks and all the wheeling and dealings. I think we're all a bit naive really.' There may be room for compromise, as Ally explains: 'we wouldn't mind trying some joint publishing, where we put in the development and somebody else puts in the marketing skills and then split the profits half and half. I think we'd have to get a lot bigger, though. Small is good.'

## FLYING SOLO

If small is good then John Gibson, programmer of *Gift to the Gods*, *Cosmic Wartoad* and *Frankie*, has gone one better. After splitting from DENTONS he pursued a solo career under contract to OCEAN.

'I'm mainly doing licenced programs now, he reveals. 'I'd like to do original programs, but OCEAN seem to be dead wary about releasing original games — you're guaranteed to sell a licenced product. If you want to do an original product it's got to be really convincing. I don't really like doing arcade conversions — they're nearly always pale imitations of the original — there hardly seems much point in doing them.'



**John Gibson**

He's just finished work on *Galivan* — so why *does* he do conversions if he sees so little point in them?

'When I started five years ago I did it because it was what I enjoyed. Now I tend to think more about the money than the art form. Mind you, that wouldn't stop me for working for less if the job made me more enthusiastic.'

Was the break from DENTONS a good move?

'Oh yes. I've got rid of the responsibilities of looking after other people. If anything goes wrong I know it's my fault. It's a bit lonely, especially when I've been working alone in my flat for a couple of days, but I do go down to DENTON and CANVAS for a bit of company. I suppose that's what I miss. When DENTONS started is was a very close-knit company. I was one of the founder members, and a Director. It was great when we started, and we had loads of ideas about being a software development house.

'At first it was like us versus the rest of the world, but after a while both Steve and I got disillusioned. There was too much turmoil in the office with too many meetings. All I wanted to do was write programs and I felt that I was getting too wound up by the difficulty of running a company. I did want more money, so when David Ward of OCEAN, after approaching me several times, made me an offer I couldn't refuse, I left.'

So money, or rather lack of it, seemed to be at the root of the DENTONS split. Was this the case with the rest of the original crew? It was time to travel eight miles up the Southport road to visit CANVAS, a regular haunt for the other three original Denton Designers. . . .



# ADDING COLOUR TO THE CANVAS . . .

Located above a large supermarket with a car park that is apparently the source of a significant proportion of Liverpool's crime figures, CANVAS is a new company set up by Steve Cain and ex-Argus Press Software programmer Roy Gibson. Recently they contracted 'Kenny' Everitt to develop the Atari ST version of *Star Trek* (for BEYOND) and Karen Davies, like CANVAS founder Steve Cain, regularly freelances for the company.

Steve explains the financial motives that lay behind the DENTONS split: 'The thing at DENTONS is that we couldn't, as individuals, earn enough money for ourselves. Looking back, at the time of the split, we really had no choice. DENTONS cost too much — it was a bit of a luxury and self-indulgent. I've been a lot happier since.

'Originally the idea was to wind the company up, but we handed it over and now it seems to be doing really well. We did some good stuff which I'm proud to have worked on, and they're doing good stuff now. Some of the guys they've got there now are brilliant — Colin Parrott is a genius. But I felt I just couldn't work with them any more.'

Kenny airs his view. 'At DENTONS we were making X pounds. Now we're working for ourselves, we're making X times three. The theory with DENTONS was that we'd take on a load of extra programmers and we'd make money out of those programmers. We'd get so much money from employing them we'd be able to pay the overheads, pay them and there would be a bit left over for us. In practice we were subsidising the extra programmers. Although we haven't got a public reputation now, the people that matter know who we are. As long as the publishers know who I am, I don't give a toss about the public.'

Karen Davies looks rather perturbed, and exclaims 'that's not a very nice thing to say . . . '

Unrepentant, Kenny continues . . . 'Yeah, but it'll never be like the pop industry. Jeff Minter's about the only exception, but then how many people bought *Colourspace*? It doesn't matter what you write, it's what sort of licence you get. Look at *Bounces* — that has eight frames of animation when the player falls over. Nobody noticed that — it was dead smooth cartoon animation and nobody noticed it. Nobody cared about the flicker-free animation. Things like that are so annoying.'

Turning to the function of CANVAS, Roy explains what the company aims to do. 'We are a commercial programming agency — we don't really intend to do our own stuff, not straight away at least. What we're about is doing conversions for other people. We just churn away. Perhaps next year we'll have enough money in the bank to allow us to take the chance and do something original. At the moment we find coin-ops the best thing to do — our artists can start work straight away and everybody else knows exactly what is expected of them.'

'At the moment, we don't have the reputation that DENTONS have. We've been talking to companies such as BRITISH TELECOM who have given us stuff to do like *Star Trek* — now that's a stepping stone for us.'

'Anonymity isn't a thing we're really bothered about, not this year. Why should we splash CANVAS all over a licenced conversion? An original program we're working on at the moment, *Wizard War*, will go out with our name on it. We might even publish it ourselves, we don't really know . . . we'll have to see how it goes.'

Kenny Everitt agrees. 'It's just like the early DENTONS stuff which went out with a miniscule credit on it. Any customer would have thought it was produced by David Ward.'

Were they pleased with *Frankie*? Steve replies 'it was nice being the programmer, but the hassles in doing it were tremendous, it practically broke DENTONS.' '*Frankie* was really original, different . . . ' Kenny adds, ' I'm not blowing *Frankie*'s trumpet especially, what I'm saying is that there is really nothing else like it'.

'The problem with doing your own thing is that it's all down to a matter of personal taste. I think *Bounces* is the best thing I've done. Gameplay wise it was far superior to *Frankie* or anything else around at the time. As a two player game it was brilliant, but it was a marketing failure. The Spectrum version of



***ROY GIBSON: 'Licence deals annoy me . . . '***



***STEVE CAIN: 'DENTONS cost too much — it was a bit of a luxury and cost too much'***

*Bounces* was a complete load of rubbish — the difference was about three months of playtesting.'

Steve continues the story behind the DENTON days. 'We got into a bit of trouble over *Transformers* with OCEAN which we managed to do in the end — we were all under so much pressure. I designed it, so I take all the blame for it. It was the worse game DENTONS ever did, and it was the biggest seller. That tells you a lot about the computer industry doesn't it?'

Roy continues on the licence theme. 'Licence deals annoy me. We lose directly in proportion to the size of the licence. If you're on a royalties deal publishers screw you substantially. What they say is 'we've got a brilliant licence and are guaranteed 100,000 sales, therefore we'll pay you less royalties because you don't need them.' You ask for a lump sum and they say they haven't got enough money left over because the licence cost so much, so their priorities are 'pay for the licence, then worry about the programming' — so how can the game be any good?'

Steve doesn't totally agree . . . 'I think the only good licence I've seen recently is *Cobra*. The graphics are really bloody great, but the game hasn't got much to do with the film. *Frankie* was another one, a lot of thought went into that. The software industry could be generating brilliant characters and licensing them out to films and TV, but look what happens. We end up having to write a game about some crappy American TV series. It's the wrong way round.

'Licences *do* take money out of the industry which *should* be left in. I'd like to get out of games and move into the film industry using videos and computers and all that stuff. That's what I want to do oney had a lot to do with the DENTONS split. The individual programmers who came together to form the original DENTONS are still working within the industry, and we can expect some interesting products in the near future: it's just the motivation behind the programming effort that has changed — in some cases, quite radically.

But the split was an amicable one — at both DENTONS and CANVAS it was difficult to decline invitations to a Mega-Party scheduled for that evening which everyone from the original DENTON DESIGNS crew had been looking forward to.

Sadly, I had to make my excuses and leave. Shame really, everyone said it was a great party. . . .




# WIN A SOFTWARE WARDROBE

It's a hard life being a Competition Minion. Apart from trudging up and down the stairs in CRASH Towers carrying sacks full of your mail and then opening all your competition entries and choosing winners, I'm at the beck and call of the Girlie Tipster and the CRASH crew, day in, day out.

I have to run down to the sarnie shop and fetch them supplies of grub every time they get the tiniest bit hungry. I'm sent off to the laundrette to wash their nasty, dirty clothes for them at lunchtime while they put their feet up in the office and drink tea — while I'm lugging great dirty sacks of washing up and down Ludlow's longest, steepest hill. In the evening I have to sweep every floor in the Towers, wash up all the dirty coffee mugs and empty all the wastepaper bins.

Now The Powers That Be have opened another office on the other side of Ludlow I'm forever running across town from one building to another with 'important' pieces of paper, like notes to Auntie Aggie asking for three empty Jiffybags or a 'Skyhook' or something. Half the time, when I get there and ask for what I've been told to go and fetch, all Aggie does is collapse in a fit of giggles, say she's run out and send me back for a jar of elbow grease or something else totally obscure. It's not fair I tell you.

Mummy Minion has a terrible time keeping my clothes clean and smart for worktime. Every day I come home drenched in sweat from all my exertions and covered in grime, sarnie crumbs, ink that's rubbed off from your letters, coffee grounds and dust. I've only got a couple of changes of clothing, so Mummy Minion is up to her elbows in soapy water nearly every evening.

Which is what gave me the inspiration for this competition. I thought it'd be a great idea if some lucky readers could have a massive collection of trendy clothing to wear in 1987. So I set about asking lots of software houses to give a T-Shirt or two to my prize fund. Lots of them have, and in fact I've managed to amass a large collection of garments. The winners of my personal Christmas Competition will have a T-Shirt, Sweatshirt or some other item of clothing to wear for virtually every day of the month! And there are a few other goodies in the prize package as well, like mugs, hats, posters, scarves and games, calculators, calculator watches, and even a sports bag is on my list of seasonal goodies. The Powers That Be at NEWSFIELD also agreed to chip in — three CRASH subscriptions and three CRASH binders are on offer, as well as T-Shirts and Sweatshirts . . .

Three sets of prizes are availble. One 'Large' person, one 'Medium' person and one 'Small' person is going to collect a Minion's Goodiebag as a result of this competition.

To keep you puzzling over Christmas, I've devised a special, giant-sized wordsquare that contains the names of lots of software houses — most of whom have popped a product of two of theirs into my monster collection of prize material. Just to make things that tiny bit difficult, I'm not going to give you a list of the names you've got to find — so get to it.

Ring round all the company names you can find in the wordsquare, fill in the coupon and send your entry direct to me: **MINION'S GOODIEBAG, C/o The Broomcupboard, CRASH TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB so that it arrives before 20th January 1987.**

## MINION'S WORDSQUARE

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G | T | F | O | S | R | O | R | R | I | M | S | R | N | O | N | H | C | E | T |
| A | S | S | O | I | N | T | E | R | C | E | P | T | O | R | E | H | E | W | S |
| R | B | U | W | H | E | L | L | O | B | M | U | M | U | N | Y | L | N | O | T |
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| Y | C | G | E | E | N | B | R | M | N | I | L | M | E | R | G | R | G | D | N |
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| E | A | A | E | U | I | I | G | M | N | P | G | C | R | P | P | M | I | I | R |
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| E | O | R | R | I | M | I | D | G | C | A | S | G | A | D | C | E | D | N | T |
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| T | F | O | S | A | L | O | I | R | A | R | I | L | E | R | E | G | N | R | A |
| Y | L | B | M | U | R | C | L | L | E | R | U | D | N | I | K | Y | X | V | M |
| S | O | S | I | N | I | L | M | R | I | G | N | A | F | L | L | I | R | L | O |
| S | L | D | A | O | R | K | I | M | C | V | E | S | Y | R | R | E | M | E | K |
| P | H | E | W | S | O | N | S | H | E | S | W | A | M | T | S | I | R | H | C |
| T | C | A | F | C | A | S | C | A | D | E | A | S | K | O | S | N | N | E | P |
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NAME ..........................................................................................

ADDRESS ......................................................................................

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.............................................. POST CODE ...............................................

SHIRT SIZE (SMALL/MEDIUM/LARGE) ..............................................


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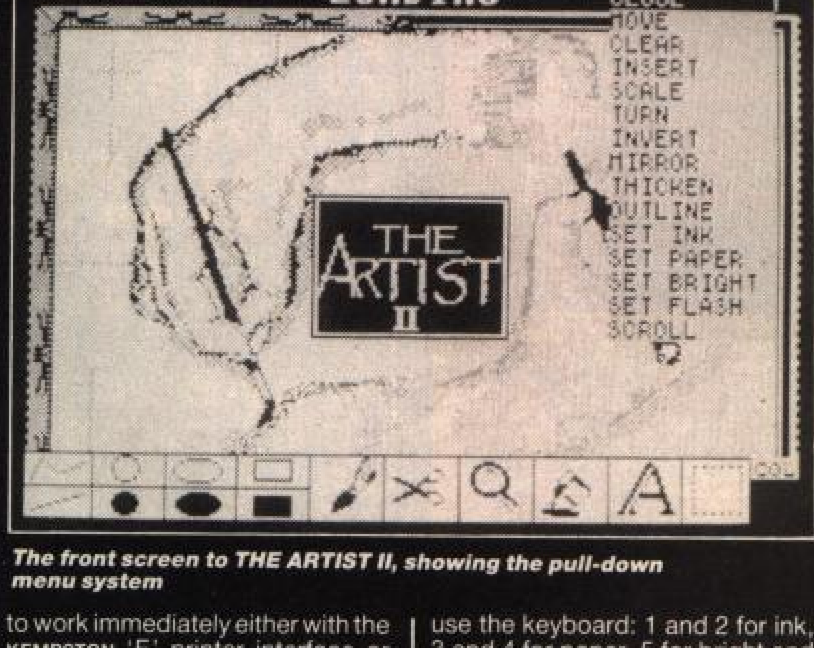

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Take control of Mag Max and search the planet for the component parts; As the assembly takes place his power and defences will increase. You will also discover special craters which will transport Max to the underground levels where more dangers lurk.
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# TECH NICHE

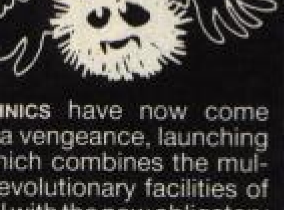


**After a short break from these pages, FRANCO FREY makes a comeback and gets into the desktop publishing possibilities offered by THE ARTIST II — the utility written by Bo Jangeborg during the creation of FAIRLIGHT II. He's impressed . . .**




*The front screen to THE ARTIST II, showing the pull-down menu system*

## ARTIST II



Back in September '85 SOFTECHNICS, a division of SOFTEK INTERNATIONAL, launched a graphics package that seemed to make any other type of utility redundant. *The Artist* had some really excellent facilities which made it stand out from the crowd, but was sadly put in the shade by the launch of *Art Studio* from the now defunct software house, OCP. *Art Studio* brought a fresh whiff of Macintosh air to the Spectrum with the introduction of the mouse and window environment.

SOFTECHNICS have now come back with a vengeance, launching *Artist II* which combines the multitude of revolutionary facilities of the original with the now obligatory mouse-come-window technique. *Artist II* should mouse itself to the top of the league despite the strong contender, *Art Studio*, which is now marketed by RAINBIRD.




The cassette contains *Artist II*, the graphics designer program; *Sprite & Font Designer* — utilities to create (still or moving) sprites and fonts; *Page Maker* — the program which could have reduced Eddie Shah's loan requirements (and probably his colour resolution), and *Screen Compressor*, the Scrooge of memory.

First of all, the question of hardware compatibility; *Artist II* file handling copes with the OPUS disk drive and the Sinclair Microdrive as well as the usual cassette recorder. Configuring to disk or Microdrive media provides access to features such as CATaloguing and ERASEing from within the program. Other interfaces may be accommodated, as SOFTECHNICS thoughtfully have a BASIC driver routine, that allows softies such as me to change the load, save and verify instructions to suit the specific hardware. In fact, in view of the review period, I even managed to save *Artist II* on Microdrive by altering the BASIC cassette load header.

Moving onto mice, *Artist II* will work either with the KEMPSTON or the *AMX* mouse. Less fortunate users will be pleased to know that *Artist II* happily can be operated from joystick or keyboard using Q,S and I,O keys for direction and N and M keys for setting/selecting or erasing. Joystick freaks without a KEMPSTON joystick interface can get their rusty old programmable interfaces out of the cupboard.

On the printer front, things are not so easy . . . *Artist II* is designed to work immediately either with the KEMPSTON 'E' printer interface or the OPUS Centronics output of the disk drive. Strangely, *Artist II* seems to neglect the *AMX* mouse Centronics port altogether. Here comes my first and only gripe. Neither AMS, makers of the *AMX* mouse, nor SOFTECHNICS provide any useful information to the unfortunate user wishing to access the Centronics interface. This is more annoying since SOFTECHNICS have made it possible to modify a simple BASIC program.

Some help could have been provided in initialising the printer interface and setting up the correct printer commands. Perhaps a look at the competition wouldn't be such a bad idea — *Art Studio* allows you to enter the appropriate code to change the line pitch and set up the 8-bit graphics command; information which can be gleaned from the printer manual.

Having sorted out the hardware aspects, it's all song and dance. All functions are accessed via a mouse and window technique. Fixed origin and concatenated (LMLWD) lines, circles, ellipses and boxes are available in the selected brush mode and with and without fill routine. Drawing is accomplished according to the selected drawing mode, accessed in the MODE window. This can be set for mono work without affecting the attribute data in inverse, over or normal mode, either with solid fill or pattern fill, or in colour mode, with the preset colour choices.

There are three ways of changing colour. Selecting palette in the MODE pull-down menu provides for entry of ink, paper and border colour with choice of bright and flash. Similarly, pointing and clicking the colour swatch at the bottom right of the screen shows the same result. The last option is to use the keyboard: 1 and 2 for ink, 3 and 4 for paper, 5 for bright and 6 for flash. Different brush sizes can be selected by clicking the brush icon.

Thirteen brushes are available, including 8 square, 1 round, 2 italic slant, a spray can effect and a blank brush. The blank brush is useful for filling areas without hard edges. The brush patterns can be redesigned with the font designer residing in the EXTRAS menu. Painting and filling areas can be done by using any of the 28 patterns, which include a solid and blank pattern. Again, patterns can be redesigned. Up to six different fonts are available in text mode. Each font can be redesigned using the font designer in the EXTRAS menu. The brush designs are held in font 6.

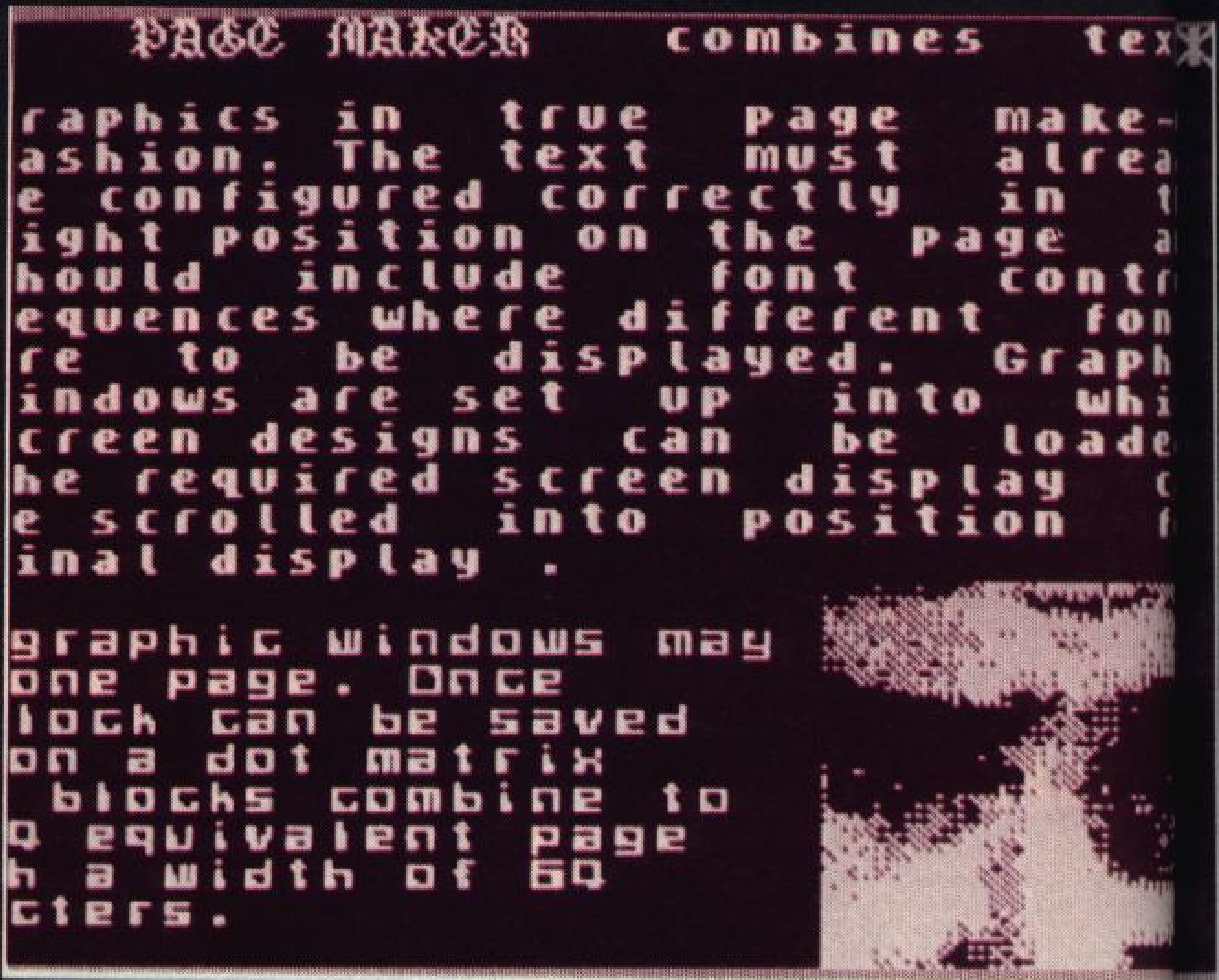
Detail work is best dealt with using the magnify mode. The screen is divided into two areas, the normal-sized image on the left and the magnified image on the right. Pointing and clicking the mouse over the area to be worked on moves the magnification to that spot. In normal mode the screen is partly covered by the icon selections. Access to this area is reached by scrolling the screen up or down using the SCREEN menu. Full view of the screen is gained with the VIEW function. An UNDO function avoids any dramas of wrecked pictures due to silly mistakes. To avoid clearing wanted work it is best to OK the current state of the picture from time to time.

The STORAGE menu provides all the functions for saving and loading of screen designs and fill patterns. It also provides output to the ZX printer or dot matrix printer. Two different print sizes are available. Apart from the straightforward dumps there are also two grey scale dumps with stippling effect

## PAGE MAKEUP

**If electronic looks could kill . . .**
Ever since Eddie Shah, who brought the merits of electronic page composition to the national newspapers of this country, computer page makeup has tumbled from the megabucks mainframe environment right down to the top-notch personal computer scene and everyone with an inspiration of becoming a Murdoch Kidd (sorry, **—ED**, I just couldn't resist) has had to buy a new Habitat desk to support their Desk Top Publishing hardware, with which to ambush a willing or unwilling readership. Coming soon at your local Spectrum . . . Yes, included in this package is *Page Maker*, which lets you create a full size page of text and graphics on an equivalent area of 96 lines of 64 characters length.

No, you're quite right, it doesn't fit all on one piddling Spectrum screen — you have to work on 4 separate blocks of two screens. Each set of screens is printed out at a time. And no, *Page Maker* does not drive a laser printer, yet . . . Spectrums driving laser printers, that'll be the day!




*Combining an image captured by a video digitiser with text written on THE WRITER. Eddie Shah, eat your heart out!*

giving a mono representation of the colour screen display.

The two real beauties of *Artist II* are the CUT and PASTE and the WINDOW facility. CUT and PASTE provides the facility of cutting out any shape segment from the current screen or from a saved screen design and transferring it to any location on the existing screen. The cut-out can be scrolled into position, inverted, mirrored, turned, blended or mixed into the main screen. To help with the cutting out of the image there are circle, line and fill functions to tackle the most complicated segments to be transferred. Screens to be composed from any screen source on record.

WINDOWS provides a set of functions which manipulate a screen sector designated by a window boundary. Using the window icon a relevant screen area is framed and a number of functions are at your disposal to manipulate the specified area: this includes functions such as CLEAR, TURN (90 degrees) INVERT, MIRROR, SCROLL within the window and global setting of paper and ink colours. Special functions include THICKEN, which thickens lines and dots within the window area and OUTLINE, which outlines any change of ink and paper (excellent solarising effects). INSERT allows insertion of another screen detail from storage and is equivalent to the cut & paste option.






## PAGE MAKER

PAGE MAKER combines the graphic facilities of *Artist II* with the text facilities of *The Writer* to provide a modest Page Makeup system. *Page Maker* can handle a print area of 96 lines 64 characters wide which represents approximately an A4 page. Due to the restraints of the Spectrum screen the work is divided up into 4 blocks of two Spectrum screens side by side providing a scrolling display area of 24 lines by 64 characters.

To begin, load the text from a *Writer* file. Forward planning is required, as the text has to be laid out in advance in the correct position within the specified display area.

*Page Maker* supports up to 5 character sets called up via special font commands embedded in the *Writer* file. Similarly, special commands provide underline and inversion of text.

Once the text is in place, blocks of graphics can be inserted by creating window areas and loading previously generated screens. The graphics can be scrolled into the correct position and fixed. There is no limit to the number of graphic areas on the 2-screen block area. When satisfactory, the block can be output to the printer and the next block tackled. Each block can be saved to tape or disk/cartridge for later use.

### SPRITE MAKING

*The Artist II* package includes a very useful sprite and font designer — *Sprite II* — which allows creation of up to 6 x 6 character square sprites. It provides the facility of loading a complete screen design and grabbing only certain areas for the sprite design. The sprites can be animated by displaying the individual sprite frames in sequence at various speeds, and the sprites can be mirrored, inverted, scrolled, thickened and outlined. Sprites can be finally saved as raw bytes for further programming.

A *Screen Compressor* is also included in the package, which reduces memory requirements for




*Five elements have been edited together to produce this Spectrum screenful — two images captured by a video digitiser, two large logos and some text from a WRITER file. . . .*

screen designs.

Summing up, *The Artist II* is the most comprehensive graphics utility on the Spectrum scene. The introduction of the mouse and window technique has improved its user friendliness, but keyboard slaves need not despair: operating the variable speed cursor without mouse or joystick is just as much fun. *Artist II* rightly deserves a CRASH SMASH!

Producer: **Softek International Ltd.**
Price: £14.95 for 48K version, £17.95 for 128K version (soon to be released)

# S-S-S-SAMPLE S-



**JON BATES presents the musician's viewpoint of the CHEETAH Sampler and looks at a similar product provided by DATEL as an improvement on their early sampler. All this and a feature on music earlier in the magazine. . . . busy boy indeed!**


This month Simon Goodwin revisits several favorite subjects, including the CHEETAH Sound Sampler and SpecDrum, and the Amstrad Spectrum Plus Two.

CHEETAH CHEATED

First of all, let me wade into the wake of last months' TECH TIPS and round up on the CHEETAH Sampler. Simon Goodwin summed up the technical side and gave it the thumbs up. To be fair, what we both had was a pre-production unit, and several of its idiosyncracies have now been ironed out. These were mainly to do with the way in which the program was arranged, especially on the editing side. However, there are several things that I feel could be improved on.

## S-SAMPLE

Having captured your sample, you are presented with the editing screen which only shows you very short sections of the sound. The object of the editing page, funnily enough, is to allow you to edit. This is a problem, since you can't see the whole sound at one go. I understand that at least now you are able to hear what you are editing, but again only the section of the sound on display. 'Grr' is what I say — it's far quicker to see the whole sound shape in one go, then zoom in having roughly positioned the cursor where you wish to edit. Also I found that if you bungled and wished to reposition the cursor, it meant copying the sample into another file and starting from scratch.

The sound quality is quite good, although a little bit more noisy than necessary perhaps. **CHEETAH** have included a repeat facility, mistakenly called 'sustain', which means that any section of the sample can be made to repeat: "Crash" could become 'Cra-a-a-a-a-sh' or 'C-C-C-C-C-C-rash' or even, 'Crash-sh-sh-sh-sh'. Great. Like it. The repetition is achieved by holding down the key for as long as you want. One annoying thing is that the whole sound sample replays when you hold down the key, even when the 'sustain' facility is disabled. Unless you want to sound like a road drill, you have to leap up and down on the keys like a cat on a hot tin roof. Why not have this as an optional function?

The filing system is good and unwanted parts of samples now can be made to relinquish areas of memory to give you optimum use of available memory. Silly niggles are that the documentation is written for the nearsighted and illogical. On the plus side, I understand that plans are afoot to make it impossible to plug in the power supply by accident, by means of a subtle change of the case design.

Overall, **CHEETAH** get a clean bill of health for this product, which they hope will emulate the *SpecDrum* in terms of sales. Mr Goodwin will doubtless have further wrinkles up his metaphoric sleeve to bind these two products together. And there, as Hamlet puts it, lies the rub. Strangely, **CHEETAH** seem to have gone out of their way to make their sampler and digital drum equipment incompatible in terms of swopping samples — the first rule of buying products in this area is to make sure that there is room for expansion and compatibility . . .

Neither the *SpecDrum* nor the sampler have MIDI options as yet. However, all is not lost. My moles have been busy at work and have told me that **CHEETAH** are developing not only a MIDI interface, but also devices which will allow you to connect the sampler to a MIDI keyboard — polyphonically at



that. Maybe they'll consider doing that for the *SpecDrum*. *"But I haven't got a MIDI keyboard."* Never mind, **CHEETAH** will sell you one that will plug into any MIDI module or even the 128's sound chip. Seems reasonable — watch this space for a review as soon as possible. And speaking of reviews. . . .

## DATEL SOUND SAMPLER

Producer: **Datel Ltd**
Price: **£49.99**

We first reviewed the original **DATEL** Sound Sampler way back about June 1985. This is the 1986 upgrade (alas we had only the 48K version), and I'm sorry to report that there really isn't a large amount of improvement. Okay, it's not so noisy and the reproduction of the samples is notably better, but I really think that **DATEL** could have also put some effort into the software and presentation of the package, especially as the sampler 'war' is hotting hot with **CHEETAH** *and* **RAM/FLARE** *getting in on the act.*

*So what do you get for your 50 notes? The usual hardware box and cheapo microphone plus software. Load up and away we go. Big "oops" here as you're only told how to plug in the incorrectly labelled hardware at the END of the instructions — and I'm still baffled by the little trim pot on the back. The options are very much the same as the old* **DATEL** *product and work very much in the same manner — with a few extras.*

***Record*** *uses an automatic sound sensor that triggers the sampling above a certain threshold of sound. Trouble is, it's too sensitive by half and is not adjustable.* **DATEL** *seem to think that you are blessed with three or more appendages as you need to hold down the 'R' key during recording. Great for things like guitar, flute and anything percussive where two hands are needed — not to mention one to hold the microphone. As it is so sensitive and awkward to use, you often have great big gaps before and after your sample.*

*The technical wonder of actual sampling is not so wonderful anymore, and we should now demand easily manipulative facilities from any self-respecting sampler. What ain't we got? That's right. You can't do a damn thing with it as regards editing. The unit will actually show you the wave of the sound sample — just like the original version did: this option was useless then, and it still is. The lack of editing really relegates this product to the second division.*




**DATEL's SOUND SAMPLER: set up and ready to start taking samples. . . . another anonymous black box to plug into the back of your computer**

***Four Part Sound*** *one ray of hope is the option to record four different sounds and play them back from the numeric keys. This is fine, but you can't alter the pitch in this mode of operation.*

***Playback*** *the playback mode proper is quite good in that it displays a static piano keyboard on screen to be played from qwerty keys, and it has an amazing 9 octave range which will defy the human ear. Anything you play is automatically stuffed in a real-time sequencer which will play back your first 100 notes (albeit not quite as faithfully as* **DATEL** *might claim, as the timing alters from your version). I would suspect too generous a quantisation here — that is, the 'rounding up' function found on drum machines to correct minor timing errors.*

*Sounds may be played in reverse or stuffed through some novelty features like 'Riser', which replays the sample 8 times at a higher pitch each time, or 'Chop Play' which replays the sample 8 times at the same pitch only shortening the length of the sample on each repetition. I'd rather have some editing instead of the digital whoopee cushion provided by these redundant features.*

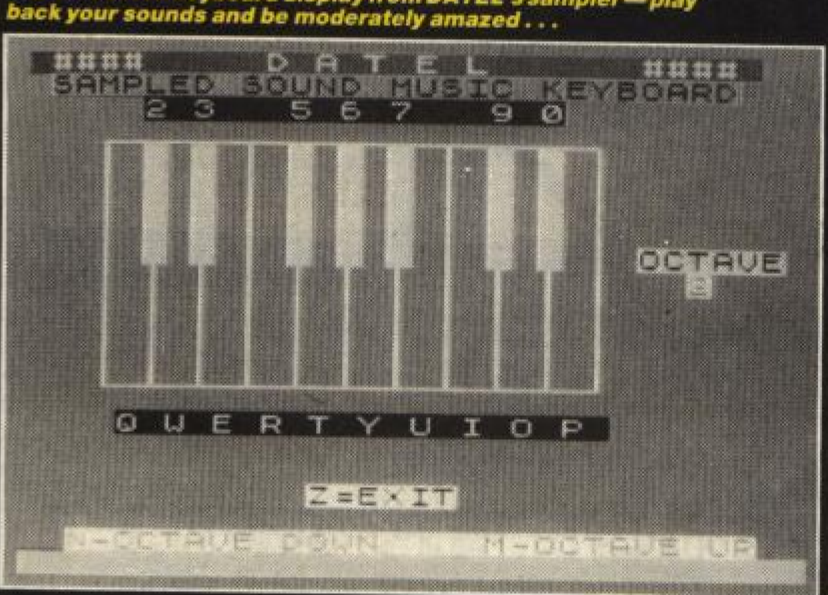
***Echo*** *offers nine preset echo effects. You have to return to the main menu each time to change them — rather annoying!*

***Microphone Level Tester*** *simply routes the signal straight through to the the output and to your amplification.*

***Load/Save*** *samples can be dumped to tape or Microdrive.*

*In practice, you have very little control over what the* **DATEL** *sound sampler does. Sure, it samples and does some party tricks with the sound, but you, the user, are pretty well subservient to some dogmatic software with very little room to manoeuvre. There is no MIDI option or synchronisation facility and on the light of other samplers now available, this package is very bovine indeed. It demands some drastic software rewriting to justify its price in face of the competition.*

**The on-screen keyboard display from DATEL's sampler — play back your sounds and be moderately amazed . . .**



# RED BOXES

## Guest techie Paul Gardner takes a look at what could be the ultimate add-on for your spectrum. It's all in a litle Red Box from ELECTRONIC FULFILMENT SERVICES

**What do you think is the ultimate add-on for your home computer? How about another computer . . . New from ELECTRONIC FULFILMENT SERVICES LTD is the *Red Box* system, a home computer specifically designed for household automation and security.**

The *Red Box* system starts as a set of three devices that you can plug into your household mains supply. *Red Leader* is a small computer system with a built-in programming language. This can communicate with and control the other two boxes supplied with the starter package: *Red One*, effectively a mains extension lead with an enclosed remote control relay, and *Red Two*, a thermal movement sensor that can detect the movement of people within a room and transmit this information to *Red Leader*. The devices communicate with each other by transmitting radio frequency signals along the mains wiring in your house.

The system arrives neatly packed in polystyrene and each device is a self-contained unit which simply plugs into any standard three-pin mains socket. Each device is fitted with a quality moulded plug which also contains a fuse of the correct rating. Instructions are included on how to change these plugs if your house has non-standard sockets.

A slim (50 page) manual is included which gives very clear instructions on how to set up the equipment. For the Spectrum this is very simple. Power up your computer in the usual way and enter the command LOAD "".

Connect the enclosed lead, which is similar to a standard cassette lead, to your Spectrum (red plug in the EAR socket) and the other end to *Red Leader, then plug in Red Leader.*

The computer in *Red Leader* detects which type of home computer it is connected to and starts up accordingly. On the Spectrum, this means that *Red Leader* sends a program from itself to the Spectrum as if it were a cassette player. The program auto runs and you are presented with a menu screen like that shown in ***Figure 1***.

I had no trouble getting this far with the system and I was quite amazed to see the signal being sent from *Red Leader* to the Spectrum at precisely the correct 'volume'.

There are two ways of operating *Red Leader*: you can use the menu driven system or you can write programs using the built-in BASIC programming language. The Spectrum is only used from here on as a keyboard and screen for *Red Leader*, and as a a route for program storage — programs written in Red BASIC can be saved to tape via your Spectrum.

The menu system shown is very easy to use. It lets you tell the computer about new devices on the system and allows these devices to be turned on and off via the SET option.

Each device has to be 'installed' by telling the computer the device's security code and logical address. As this is a fairly tedious process to have to repeat, you can save all the current device information to tape using the KEEP option from the menu.

From this menu you can set devices to switch on and off at specific times of the day. The system has its own built-in clock which has to be set each time *Red Leader* is powered up.

It is also possible to make one device dependent upon another. For example, you can arrange for whatever is plugged into *Red One* to be switched on whenever *Red Two* detects a movement.

As the starter pack only contains two controllable devices, the applications are fairly limited. It is possible, for example, to have the system switch your electric blanket on and off at preset times every day — or you could use both devices to give you an 'intelligent' porch light . . . anytime someone moves close to the sensor a light can be switched on.

If you want to use the system for more complicated applications you will need to purchase some of the optional extra devices available and also learn how to program the system using the built-in BASIC.

***Figure 2*** is a listing of a BASIC program that I wrote to have the system perform as a simple home security device. The two devices in the program are referred to as ALARM, for the mains powered alarm bell that I plugged into *Red One*, SENSOR, for the thermal movement sensor and finally, SENSW, for the small reset switch which is built into the movement sensor.

This set up worked as follows. I would arm the system by connecting the Spectrum to *Red One* and running the program. The Spectrum can then be disconnected as it is no longer required. The movement sensor had a field of view that covered my front door and hall. On the way out of the house I had to walk past the sensor, so as I passed it I would press the small switch located on the sensor, thus gaining 10 seconds to leave its field of view.

The program is written so that I can gain entry to my house without setting the alarm bell clanging.

***Figure 1***




***Figure 2***

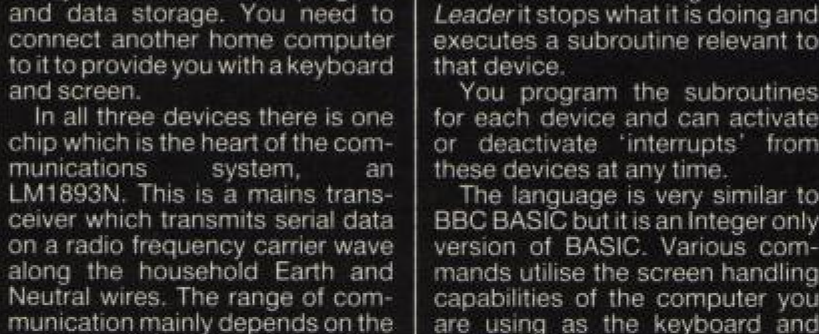
```
10 REM SAMPLE PROGRAM
FOR HOME SECURITY
20 FOR N = 1 TO
DEVICES:ERASE 1:NEXT N
30 REM SET UP ALL THE
DEVICES TO BE USED FOR THIS
APPLICATION
50 LET NORING = 0 : REM
STATUS FLAG
60 READ NUMDEVICES
70 FOR N = 1 TO NUMDEVICES
80 READ N$,A,B,C,D
90 INSTALL(N$,A,B,C,D) : REM
THIS INSTALLS THE DEVICE
100 LET ST = TELL(N$,OFF) :
REM RETURNS NON ZERO IF
NOT PRESENT
110 IF ST = 0 THEN GOTO 160
120 PRINT ''CANNOT COM-
MUNICATE WITH-'';N$
130 PRINT ''PLEASE INVESTI-
GATE''
140 INPUT '';RESS ENTER TO
CONTINUE'';A$
150 GOTO 100
160 NEXT N
165 REM SET UP EVENT HAND-
LING ROUTINES
170 WHEN 2 GOSUB 210 : CON-
TINUE
180 WHEN 3 GOSUB 310 : CON-
TINUE
185 REM THERE IS NO ACTUAL
PROGRAM JUST WAIT IN A
LOOP
190 GOTO 190
200 END
210 REM EVENT HANDLING
ROUTINE FOR THE MOVEMENT
SENSOR
230 LET RING = TIME   10
240 IF TIME RING THEN GOTO
240
250 IF NORING = 1 THEN GOTO
280
260 TELL(''ALARM'',ON)
270 LET NORING = 0
280 TELL(''SENSOR'',OFF)
300 RETURN
310 REM EVENT HANDLING
ROUTINE FOR SENSOR
SWITCH
330 LET NORING = 1
340 LET DELAY = TIME   10
350 IF TIME DELAY THEN GOTO
350
370 RETURN
380 DATA 3 : REM 3 DEVICES
390 DATA
ALARM,1,860849,2,1628250627
: REM CODES FOR RED ONE
400 DATA SEN-
SOR,1,204976,1,781711363 :
REM CODES FOR RED TWO
410 DATA SENSW
,1,204976,2,781711363 : REM
RED TWO SWITCH
```

When I return to the house the sensor detects my movement, but gives me a delay of 10 seconds during which I can press the small switch on *Red Two* to disable the sensor for a further 10 seconds. This gives me time to leave the sensor's field of view. Then I can leisurely stroll upstairs, reconnect the Spectrum and stop the program. Unfortunately, the sensor is so sensitive to thermal movement that one of my cats was sufficient to set the alarm off!

## THE HARDWARE

*Red Leader* is a fully functional computer with a 6502 processor, a 6220 VIA, 16K Bytes of ROM (an EPROM in the review model) and 8K Bytes of RAM used for program and data storage. You need to connect another home computer to it to provide you with a keyboard and screen.

In all three devices there is one chip which is the heart of the communications system, an LM1893N. This is a mains transceiver which transmits serial data on a radio frequency carrier wave along the household Earth and Neutral wires. The range of communication mainly depends on the amount of outside interference, but I tested the review model along the length of a long suite of offices



***Inside RED LEADER — the chippery-pokery that talk to the Red Squad and co-ordinates their efforts***

— certainly, you should have no problem in a standard size house.

*Red One* contains a mains socket which is connected to its mains input via a 16 amp relay. This relay is controlled by *Red Leader* but the setting can be switched locally by using a small reset switch on the side of the box. This small switch is set flush to the surface and is unlikely to be pressed accidentally.

*Red Two* contains a thermal detector, the fluctuating output of which is used to detect thermal movement. This detector is housed at the centre of a crude plastic lens system to give it an extended field of view. If *Red Two* is mounted in the corner of a room it can detect movement almost anywhere in the room except directly below the unit when it is mounted above head height. The detector is particularly sensitive to movement from side to side across its field of view, but I could approach *Red Two* without it detecting my presence providing I approached head-on. It ignored me until I was less than two feet away.

The devices communicate very reliably with each other and seem to be fairly insensitive to the household appliances that usually generate interference (drills, washing machines and so on.)

## THE PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE

*Red Leader* supports a powerful programming language which has the feature of being 'event driven' by the external devices. That means that you can have a program running, and whenever one of the devices sends a signal to *Red Leader* it stops what it is doing and executes a subroutine relevant to that device.

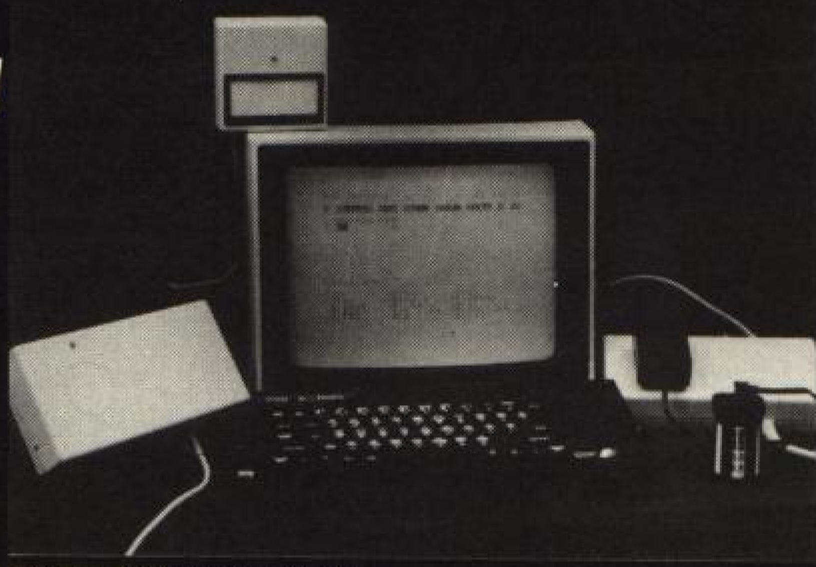
You program the subroutines for each device and can activate or deactivate 'interrupts' from these devices at any time.

The language is very similar to BBC BASIC but it is an Integer only version of BASIC. Various commands utilise the screen handling capabilities of the computer you are using as the keyboard and screen for *Red Leader*.

The BASIC supports long variable names and is fairly fast — it also has some element of structured programming support by having REPEAT-UNTIL loops and event-driven interrupts, but for reasons I shall explain, I don't think many Spectrum users would attempt any 'serious' programming on it.

## PROBLEMS

The review model I received was supposed to be a full production version and not a pre-release model, but inside *Red Leader* there were some fairly messy hand-wired 'patches' on the circuit board. The first *Red Leader* I was sent stopped working after one day of intermittent use, and investigation showed that the main capacitor on the low voltage power supply was not actually soldered in place, but simply rested in the lead holes in the board! However, a replacement was sent within a day (well done GPO) and



***The RED BOX team in formation. . . .***

the new one worked fine.

The circuit boards in *Red One* and *Red Two* are very neatly done and don't appear to have any last-minute fixes on them.

In practical use, the most frustrating aspect of the whole system is the Spectrum. (Don't complain yet!) The problems lie not with Spectrum but with the machine code program that has the Spectrum act as the *Red One* terminal. Apparently, an ex-Sinclair programmer wrote most of this code and then left it unfinished for some other unfortunate programmer to complete.

It is quite an appalling piece of code. Judging by its operation. The keyboard appears to have been so thoroughly 'de-bounced' that you cannot type faster than four character per second on it. If you want to repeat a key, the auto repeat occurs almost a full second after the first key press and repeats at about half-second intervals. So it takes about four seconds to back-space over an eight character spelling mistake!

I talked to one of the technical bods on the *Red Box* team who explained some of the reasons behind these problems. He assured me that they would be sorted out in a later model.

The Spectrum implementation also does not let you send anything to the printer (a programming language that doesn't let you list the program on paper!) and when you try and save a program written in Red BASIC to your cassette (Microdrives not supported) the Red Box downloads the program into the Spectrum memory and then prompts you to swap the *Red Box* leads over with your cassette leads before supplying the prompt 'press any key to continue'. However, it doesn't wait for you to 'press any key'. It just starts the tone immediately. So you have about half a second to swap the leads over and release the pause button on your cassette recorder.

I was so amazed at how bad the practical aspects of using the Spectrum were that I had a go using the *Red Boxes* on another computer, the BBC (Hiss!). Not surprisingly, it worked beautifully — keyboard type-ahead, printer, disks — everything you would expect.

Suspicious characters might be tempted to think that the *Red Box* system was developed for the BBC and had been hurriedly amended to support other machines in order to capture a wider market.

When speaking to some of the designers of the system, I learned that they intend to release another two versions of *Red Leader* to overcome some of these problems. The next version will have a 32K Byte ROM and should be able to contain some better terminal routines for the machines supported.

Yet another version is intended to have a straightforward RS232 interface and so be able to communicate with any computer that supports a simple ASCII terminal program.

## FORTHCOMING EXTRAS

As the original system is clearly limited in scope the designers have several new *Red Boxes* planned which can be add to the basic 'starter' system.

*Red Alert* is intended to be a fully-functional burglar alarm control system, which will be battery backed and capable of communication with *Red Leader*, providing inputs from simple window and door switches.

An RS232 unit is envisaged to allow you to let different home computers communicate with each other or devices like printers along the house wiring at a speed of 2400 baud.

Finally a 2 channel A/D converter unit under development will take inputs from simple analogue devices like temperature sensors and communicate the information to *Red Leader*.

## CONCLUSION

Clearly the *Red Box* system is under development. At £130 for the 3 unit starter pack I don't think it has much to recommend it to Spectrum users until the problems with the terminal emulation program are sorted out. When the manufacturers take the Spectrum seriously enough, and when there are a few more devices available, we'll take another look.

## PRICES

***Red Box* starter system:** £129 including *Red Leader*, *Red One* and *Red Two*
**Extra Units:** *Red One* and *Red Two £35 each*
***New Units:*** *prices to be announced.*

# TECH TIPS



**Plug-in devices to save and alter programs are all the rage. Simon Goodwin presses the button on DATEL'S *Snapshot 2* and checks out the *Genie* package for ROMANTIC ROBOT's *Multiface 1*.**



## SNAPSHOT 2

DATEL have just launched *Snapshot 2*, a new plug-in gadget to save programs in memory onto tape or Microdrive at the press of a button. There are several similar devices — *Multiface 1*, *Interface 3*, *SpecMate* and the MIRAGE *Microdriver*. Even a few disk systems, such as the *Beta* and the new *Disciple*, offer this feature nowadays, so it's obviously a busy market.

Some of these devices have — quite legitimately — annoyed software houses because they make it very easy to steal programs. The DATEL, like the *Microdriver*, is less prone to this criticism than other models, because you must have the interface fitted to re-load a file. This doesn't stop people borrowing software and making copies, but it's the best DATEL can do to discourage theft. This is a tricky issue, as I feel that piracy does reduce the volume and — especially — the variety of software that honest souls can buy.

Then again, high prices and inconvenient protection methods do not encourage honesty. I believe that people have a right to transfer software that they have bought onto disk or Microdrive, and this kind of device is often the only way you can do that.

DATEL feel that the *Snapshot* has three main selling-points, besides the obvious one I've dealt with above: there's a built in Kempston-compatible joystick port; you can modify bytes in memory; and the price is low — just £24.95, or £5-£15 cheaper than similar devices.

The *Snapshot* comes in the usual black box, with a red button on the left and the joystick port on the right side. You need the joystick socket even if you've already got an interface, because there's no through-port on the back. The documentation was folded under the interface — and consists of five white A4 sheets, with text printed in a dot-matrix font on one side of the paper. You also get a program, on cassette.

### USING SNAPSHOT

*Snapshot 2* is not immediately useful when you plug it in, because it does not contain any built-in software — you must load a small code file. It takes about a minute to load the supplied tape — you can transfer the code to Microdrive if you know how to convert the loading program, but the utility will not do this for you, and there are no conversion instructions. The code seems to load into memory hidden behind the Spectrum's ROM, so you can't access it except by pressing the button, which causes it to run. There's no information about the memory access mechanism in the documentation, which is a pity.

The software saves entire programs with their screens, to tape or Microdrive — there's no support for disk drives, although it should be easy enough to produce new software as an add-on. DATEL say they intend to do this, but they don't say which interfaces they will support or when the code will be ready. They also promise new software to copy screen images to a printer at the press of a button, as *Multiface 1* can do. They plan a package to control the speed of programs, rather like NIDD VALLEY's *Slomo*, but again there's no sign of the feature yet.

Once you've loaded the *Snapshot* software you can load the program you want to transfer to tape or Microdrive in the normal way. The *Snapshot* does not appear to use any of the standard 48K memory.

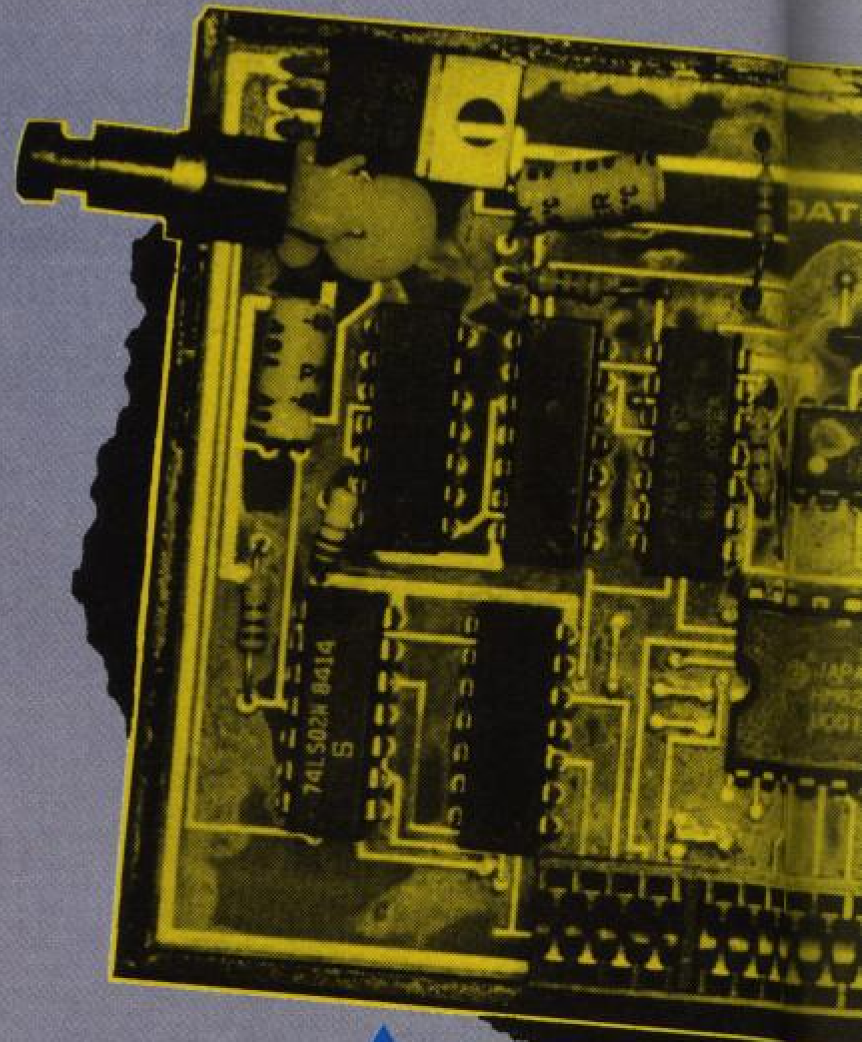
### NO JOY JOYSTICK

Your program should load and run as normal with the *Snapshot* connected. I did find one strange problem with the built-in joystick port, which would not give a 'move left' signal if I plugged in a CHEETAH *Mach 1* microswitch joystick!

The *Snapshot* interface worked OK with an older and nastier *Quickshot 1*, but I could not work out why the *Mach 1* was incompatible. The stick works fine with a genuine *Kempston* interface, *Multiface 1* and all the other makes of computer that litter my office, even including the wonky ports on Amstrad's Plus Two, so I'm inclined to blame DATEL for this incompatibility. I'll contact DATEL and CHEETAH, and should be able to get both replies into print next month.

I had a look inside the *Snapshot* to see if there was an obvious fault, but I couldn't see anything likely to cause the problem. The internal construction of DATEL's interface was rather nasty — the red button was only held in by a blob of glue on the circuit board, although the joystick socket was securely fitted. A bare wire was soldered to the underside of the board, passing within a millimetre of several soldered connections that it was clearly not meant to touch.

Anyhow, I carried on with the test using the *Quickshot*. When the red button is pressed the computer immediately stops whatever it is doing and prints a blue and yellow menu on the top eight lines of the screen. There are five options, each selected by a single key- press. **S** saves the contents of memory onto tape or Microdrive. A second prompt appears to ask you which device is to used for the save, and you are then asked to type the file name.

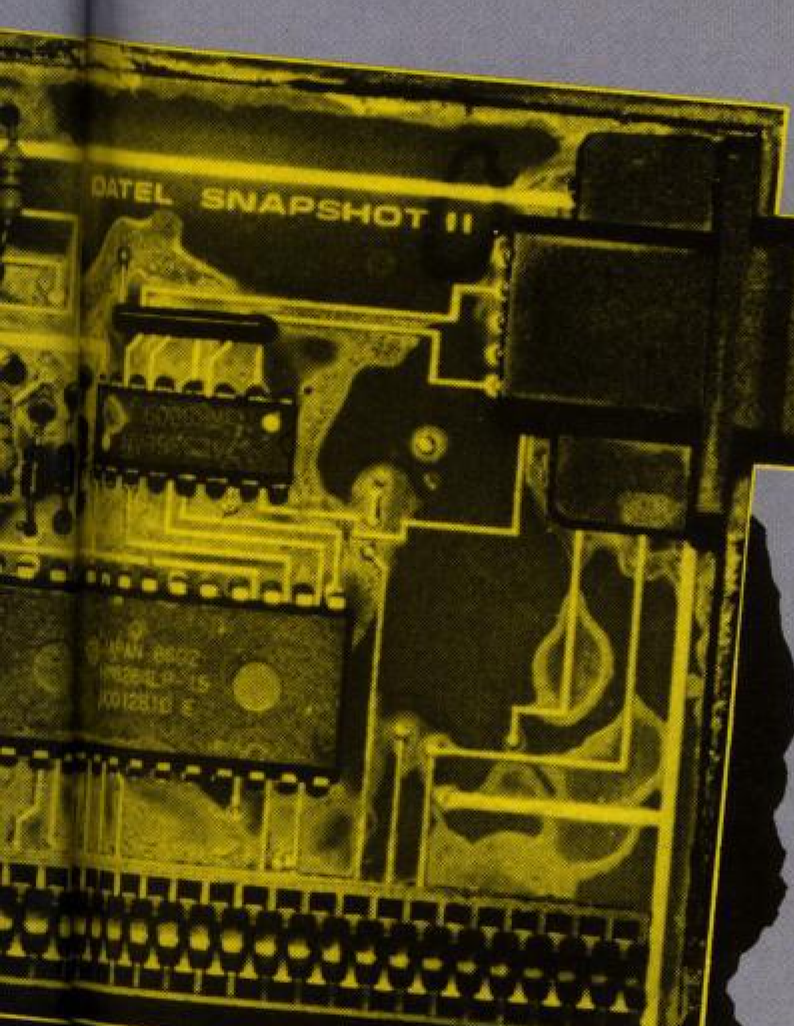


*A Snapshot of DATEL's SNAPSHOT. Note the blob of glue holding the red button on!*

For some reason the program selects Caps Lock — all capital letters — as you enter the file name. I've never understood why computer enthusiasts are so keen on WRITING EVERYTHING IN CAPITALS, so I pressed Shift and 2, which normally cancels Caps Lock. This it did, but not before printing LOAD "", rather disturbingly, in the input window. I tried again and got Caps Lock back, but LOAD "" popped up somewhere else. This does suggest that DATEL have not tested their software very carefully. One good feature is that ENTER on its own gets you straight back to the main menu.

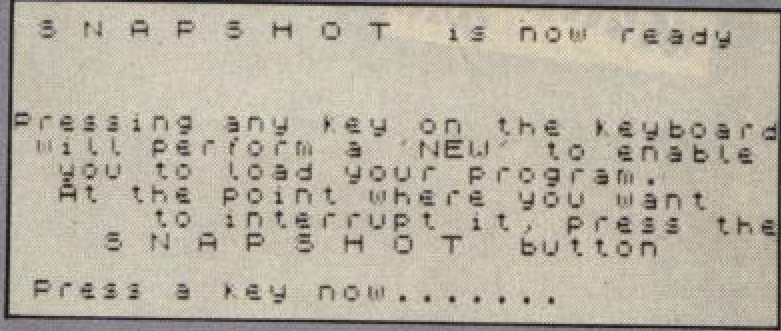
The **A** menu option lets you alter or examine memory. The prompt 'Address' appears, and you must type in the number of the memory location that you want to change. The computer then prints the present contents of that byte, and asks you to type a replacement value. If you press ENTER on its own, the computer steps on to the next address, and so on.

This feature is very useful if you want to put POKEs into a game without messing around with the loading program. You can stop the progression through the memory by typing a full stop, when you are asked for a new address. Values can be printed and entered in deci-










mal or hexadecimal. You must type a hash character at the start of the address if you want to use hex. Press ENTER on its own to get back to the main menu.

The next option, **G**, lets you go back to the current program — the top part of the display is restored as if you had never pressed the button. You can only return to the exact point at which you stopped the program — you can't jump to a specific address.

The **L** option is used to load a file that has been saved previously with **S**; ENTER on its own loads the next file in this case, but you can break into the load in the usual way.

**K** 'kills' the current program, resetting the computer but leaving the *Snapshot* routines in memory.

## TESTING

The biggest problem with the *Snapshot* is that it doesn't seem to work with most commercial programs. I tried it with a collection of games, and VORTEX's aging *Android 2* was the only one that was transferred properly.

*Snapshot* can compress programs to reduce their disk or tape storage requirement, and *Android 2* was condensed into a single 29K file, including the screen, in 25 seconds. I'd like to give more examples, but I didn't manage to copy anything else!

*On The Run*, from DESIGN DESIGN, and **MICROMEGA/Derek Brewster**'s *Codename Mat* started to save, but the screen filled with gibberish after a few blocks had been written to Microdrive and the only way out after that was to pull the plug.

I spent quite a while re-loading these games and trying again, pressing the button at various points after loading, but I never managed to save anything useful. At one point I pressed the button while *On The Run* was playing and the machine crashed without even printing the *Snapshot 2* menu — about half of the 'Alter' menu appeared, then my trusty Spectrum locked up.

I tried to transfer CHEETAH's *SpecDrum* program to Microdrive;



this is a prime candidate for conversion from tape. Again, the machine spun the drive for a while, then locked up. Repeated attempts gave the same result, so I used ROMANTIC ROBOT's *Multiface 1* — the only other such utility I have — and everything went smoothly. If *Android 2* had not copied properly I would have suspected a duff *Snapshot* interface. Since *Multiface* copied the test programs without trouble it seems likely that there's something wrong with DATEL's software.

## SNAP DECISION

*Snapshot 2* has a lot of competition, and it doesn't seem to work very well. Unless you're very short of cash, and you only want to convert simple programs, I can't recommend this product.

# GENIE



ROMANTIC ROBOT have been selling a *Snapshot*-type device for a while now. Their *Multiface 1* is something of a Rolls Royce compared with the *Snapshot 2*, and has a price tag to match — five pence short of forty quid. The *Multiface* consists of an 8K ROM and 8K of RAM, providing the instant SAVE facility for most disk and tape systems, plus options to examine and POKE memory. It can also call any address or print out the screen display. Besides the magic button you get a through port for other peripherals, a Kempston joystick socket and a switch to make the interface undetectable to the computer.

One very nice feature of this system is the way that you can load your own applications into the 8K RAM, independently of the standard 48K, and call them up at will while a program is loaded. ROMANTIC ROBOT give full instructions to help you do this, although the facility is only available to machine-code programmers.

ROM-ROB have just launched a package that uses this feature; as such it is worthless unless you've got *Multiface 1*, but I have found it so useful over the last few weeks that I think it might even justify the purchase of a *Multiface* to some people, especially keen hackers.

The package is called *Genie*. It lets you stop and start any program at any point, and examine its operation in great detail. In effect, it is a small but well-designed machine-code monitor that is compatible with absolutely everything. *Genie* costs £*.**, and consists of a cassette, containing about 5K of code, and six neatly-printed, well written A4 pages of documentation.

*Genie* loads into the RAM on the interface — the instructions tell you how to copy it to Microdrive or disk and configure it for different printers; *Genie* will print via any device connected to the Spectrum's channel 3, including the ZX printer, the Spectrum 128 serial port, and most plug-in interfaces. You must tell the program whether or not your printer expects 'line-feed' characters at the end of each line.

Once *Genie* is installed you can call it up by pressing the red button. Instead of the usual *Multiface* menu, an eight-line window appears at the top of the screen. You can call up the normal *Multiface* menu by typing BREAK as you press the red button, but you MUST reload *Genie* before you press the button again.

Everything *Genie* does appears in the eight-line window. The colour-scheme is bright but readable unless your telly is playing up — characters are white on red or black on yellow. The top part of the window lists keys that work in most modes, while a two line menu bar carries the main options, rather cryptically listed as 'DIS', 'TEXT', 'NUM', 'Z80', 'FIND' and 'RET'.

Z80 shows you the values of all the Z80 registers, including the program counter. You can alter any value, and turn interrupts on or off, but you can't display or change the interrupt mode. So




what, I hear you say!

FIND will search the whole 48K RAM for a sequence of up to 24 bytes. Searching is very quick, and you can step from one match to the next by pressing a key. This is great for looking for specific instructions but not so hot for messages, because the values to be found must be entered as numbers — not text.

DIS is a full Z80 disassembler — a routine which converts stored numbers into machine-code mnemonics, whether or not they are really part of a program. You can start and stop disassembly at any address.

DIS has several nice features — it sifts out the 'error code' bytes which follow RST 8 instructions, and decodes the undocumented Z80 instructions, like SLL C and SUB A,IXH, which confuse lesser disassemblers. The display can be made to scroll continuously or print a new line when you press ENTER. At top speed, or if you hold the key down, the information rolls by very fast indeed.

The TEXT option is similar but interprets memory as characters. Unprintable codes appear as full stops. TEXT is very useful if you feel like changing a few messages in your favourite (or least favourite) program. NUM prints the numeric values in memory.

All of the *Genie* options let you switch from decimal to hex input and output at any time: this is achieved by pressing the H key. The border colour changes from blue to cyan to signal which number base is currently selected. Addresses actually change their form on the screen when you press H!

It takes a while to get used to the way *Genie* accepts numbers — you don't have to press ENTER if you type the maximum number of characters (five for a decimal address or three for a byte value.) I found it a little irritating that leading zeroes are always printed.

You can print the contents of the window at any time by typing **C** for Copy, and relay all output to the printer between presses of **P**. The **G** option lets you go backwards through the memory; it takes DIS a few bytes to work out what has happened thereafter, but most disassemblers have this quirk.

You can change any data in registers or memory by pressing **A** for Alter, as corresponding values are displayed. You're asked for an address, but ENTER gives the last one examined. You have to type new values as single-byte numbers.

Finally, the 'RET' option returns you to the program that was interrupted, restoring the old display on the top 8 lines of the screen. If you have altered the value of the PC register, the program re-starts at the address you set. The instructions illustrate how you can return directly to ZX BASIC.

There are a few missing features that I would have liked, such as conditional search and replace and some facility to enter text directly into the machine, rather than as numbers. However, *Genie* has to fit into the Spectrum's memory map with the *Multiface* ROM and 48K of program to be examined, and the limited space has been well used.

Real hackers will love *Genie*, but it's pretty meaningless unless you understand machine-code. It will not necessarily be useful for debugging your own code, unless your programs are so large that there's no spare RAM for a conventional monitor. However, it is absolutely wonderful for getting inside someone else's code. If that's what you enjoy, you'll find *Genie* a very professional tool — simple, effective and unique.

# POSTBAG



I only finished writing my column for last month's CRASH about half an hour ago, so please bear with me if I don't mention your most recent letters till next issue. The weird world of magazine publishing means that I'm writing this late in October, in order to get some words in the shops before reindeer-hooves hit the slates!

Anyhow, several people have written in with comments about the Spectrum 128. According to **Darren Millin** and someone with no address and an indecipherable signature, the best way to persuade programs to run on the new machine if they don't load properly is to load them on an old 48K Spectrum and transfer them to tape or Microdrive with some 'magic button' type of interface — both my correspondents used *Interface 3*. Apparently most programs will work fine if you re-load the saved file into a 128 set to 48K mode.

This tip will certainly by-pass a lot of the protection mechanisms that tend to stop programs running on the 128, but it won't cure the problem with interrupts that I dealt with in a past column. Still, its worth a try if you buy a game and then discover it won't load directly into the 128.

**Anthony O'Neill** has discovered that games for the Spectrum 128 will load into a 48K machine. He has tried the two games bundled with the old 128 and found that *Neverending Story* would not just load, but run as well! The trick is to press SPACE when loading appears to be complete and the screen is filled with gibberish. The prompt 'Press Space to continue' should appear. Do as you're told, and the game will run, although most of the graphics are scrambled and the exits are wrongly labelled. Unfortunately *Supertest* just stops with an OK message if you try to load it on a 48K machine.

We noticed that the cassette format was unchanged when the 128 games first arrived at CRASH, although we didn't realise that *Neverending Story* would actually run in 48K. Programs that use the extra memory load files in the normal way, but 'page' the extra memory between one file and the next so that code is loaded by writing to an output port. I gave the exact details of this mechanism in June.

Anyhow, the old Spectrum just ignores the instructions to switch between ports, so successive lumps of code or data get loaded one upon another, into the top 16K of memory. As long as the switched pages only contain data, the program will work okay, although it will only be able to use the last lump of information that was loaded into the paged area.

**Peter Dalling** has written in with good news for tidy-minded Microdrive users. If you consider a fiver a bit pricey for a TRANSFORM Microdrive storage box, Peter has an alternative. Apparently, electronics firm MAPLIN sell storage drawers that hold cartridges very neatly, that is if you leave the plastic divider in place and add a couple of cardboard spacers. You can fit 30-36 tapes into each box. The MAPLIN part number is F900A, and the price in the 1986 catalogue is £1.48.

And there would appear to have been some form of misunderstanding concerning the *Drum Editor* I reviewed last month. **Bob Pearson** of CHEETAH has written to both me and Mr Bleakley to point out that *SpecDrum* is a copyrighted name — a name that the copyright holders intend to protect fully. Anyone else planning to write and sell software to run on CHEETAH hardware should bear this in mind . . .

There'll be lots more feedback from readers in next month's TECH TIPS. If you've invented something fiendish, or if you want to pass on some technical advice, please write to me at TECH TIPS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SHY 1DB . . .

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## DEREK BREWSTER'S

# Adventure Trail

# CLASS OF '86



1986 will not be remembered as the year of the adventure, even if many people, bored with the transient thrills of arcade did suddenly discover the more lasting satisfactions to be found in adventuring. The biggest game of the year, *Lord of the Rings*, based on the famous Tolkien work (and representing the next logical step for MELBOURNE HOUSE who turned *The Hobbit* into a classic adventure), was to many a huge disappointment as it failed to live up to the expectations raised by its pedigree. It was again Philip Mitchell, and again MELBOURNE HOUSE who were wrapping it all up and selling it, but the end product just wasn't in the same league as Tolkien's masterpiece. In a sense, *Lord of the Ring's* failure as a major piece of software was symptomatic of a broader malaise in the adventure world, as if adventuring had lost its way and was not quite sure of the path ahead.

LEVEL 9, of course, continued to champion the cause of imaginative adventuring with their much respected releases, *Worm in Paradise* (the final part of the *Silicon Dream* trilogy) and *The Price of Magik*. Their success is justified, as a lot of time and effort has gone into honing their own adventure system to give adventure just as much pride in the technical innovation stakes as arcade. Hand-in-hand with the technical competence is a desire to provide coherent storylines and gamesplay so the player becomes as involved with the game as with a good novel. Because adventuring is a more difficult market, LEVEL 9 have quite sensibly diversified as much as possible within their chosen field: versions for each game span almost every known computer, and they have not been averse to dipping their fingers into many different pies, as in their link up with MOSAIC's *Adrian Mole* books. The other big name of 1986 was undoubtedly Fergus McNeill of DELTA 4 who mined quite a different seam. Humour was always an area which the medium of adventuring could develop to its full, and DELTA 4 were not slow in spotting this simple fact. The Quill, for once, provided a useful vehicle to express a budding comic talent. DELTA 4 had always secured a loyal following among adventure freaks, but this year saw the outfit's rise to fame and chart respectability epitomised by the tremendous amount of interest in *The Boggit*, a game which successfully lampoons the MELBOURNE HOUSE classic.

However, in summing up this year it is worrying that a great number of individuals have thought it feasible to set up software houses, and then devote a great amount of time and money to launching Quilled games that are neither innovative nor remarkable in any way. There are two conflicting thoughts which cross my mind as I wade through these games every month. The first thought is one of sadness that anyone can think that a profitable, or even a break-even situation, can be gleaned from such lack-lustre product. But my second thought is one of hope and optimism; if adventuring can stimulate such ground-level enthusiasm in the form of experimental software releases, adventure clubs, and small circulation magazines, perhaps this could be the avenue to encourage the development of really challenging adventures.

From the enthusiast's domain, one or two mail-order products did make it to the larger software concerns and the mass market. In this area there can be no doubt that the advent of budget software has kept adventuring alive when no full-priced games were in the offing. MASTERTRONIC, ATLANTIS (not least with their famous *Mafia* games), and more recently PLAYERS (a derivative of INTERCEPTOR who have recently rejoined the full-priced adventure scene) have all released very reasonable adventures. MASTERTRONIC's efforts are all the more remarkable when their no-Quilled policy is considered. With programs such as *ZZZZ*, experimentation with icons was not beyond this budget software producer. However, let us not forget a company which saw the same market, and was large enough to rival MASTERTRONIC in sales of budget adventure. FIREBIRD's *Seabase Delta* was an enormous hit, following on the heels of the highly successful *Subsunk*.

The mighty OCEAN games empire developed their own adventure system, seen in the competent releases *Never Ending Story* and *Hunchback the Adventure*. This system used the novel idea of forming a colourful collage of backdrop, with events and objects superimposed over it. ACTIVISION turned out the highly impressive if more traditional, *Mindstone*, while PSS and MIKRO-GEN went a little astray in their efforts to try something new with *Swords & Sorcery* and *Shadow of the Unicorn* respectively.

Despite the fact that adventuring has a dated image, with interest in pre-1986 games matching that shown for games of this year, I still think that it has a future. In fact it's encouraging to note that if authors have the presence of mind to mould together innovative programming with inventive stories, they can be assured of producing a game which will be remembered long after arcade games released around the same time are forgotten.

Certainly, as with pop music, tremendous sales are there for those who cynically milk the teen market, but, as with pop music, there are also significant prizes for those who cater for a broader appeal. I hope the success of *Trivial Pursuit*, the computer adaptation of the cult board quiz, is significant, and marks a greater inclination on the part of software houses to look afresh at the whole world of games play.





# JEWELS OF DARKNESS

Producer: **Rainbird**
Price: **£14.95**
Authors: **Level 9**




*Jewels of Darkness* follows the usual rules of naming software, ie make it sound like everything else. In fact this unoriginal title covers a trilogy of very famous games, games which go back to the very earliest days of adventuring. *Colossal Adventure*, the first of the three, is a direct descendant of the Crowther and Woods mainframe jaunt. This was the bane of many an academic computing fraternity in the late seventies and early eighties. *Adventure Quest*, the second tape, is played out on the same ground as the first, but is a LEVEL 9 original, while *Dungeon Adventure* completes the trilogy with the most original story and feel of the lot.

All three have been completely overhauled and updated since their first release, with extended text descriptions, enhanced language manipulation, and, most noticeably to a *Colossal* veteran, pictures. Even if these do only amount to the usual LEVEL 9 minimalistic art school, they still add some colour to these text classics.

The packaging is of the very highest standard with full instructions (which even go so far as telling you how to wrestle with the firm plastic casings), and a novella by Peter McBride indicating a high regard and a great confidence in the product by RAINBIRD. I tend to go along with this confidence, as this package, even at nigh on £15, is still superb value for money given the effort to breath new life into these oldies (but extremely goodies).

Presentation is all very well of course, but what of the substance. Well, what can be said from the outset is, if you haven't played these games before, or if you are thinking of looking into adventuring but don't know where to start, then this trilogy can provide an insight into what makes adventuring great. The stories behind each part, the strong and evocative descriptions of each location, and the clever weighting and interlinking of puzzles and objects provide the fuel to set burning even the dullest of imaginations. One offshoot of the games' notoriety is the ease of discussing the adventure with fellow adventurers, many of whom will have at least tried *Colossal*, so you can end up in animated conversation - much the same as with Tolkien novels.

The features designed to bring these old masterpieces into line with new advances are most impressive. Most immediately apparent is the type-ahead feature; even while pictures are being drawn, the next move can be made. Enhancements in vocabulary include GET ALL or EVERYTHING, AGAIN and RAM SAVE and EXITS.

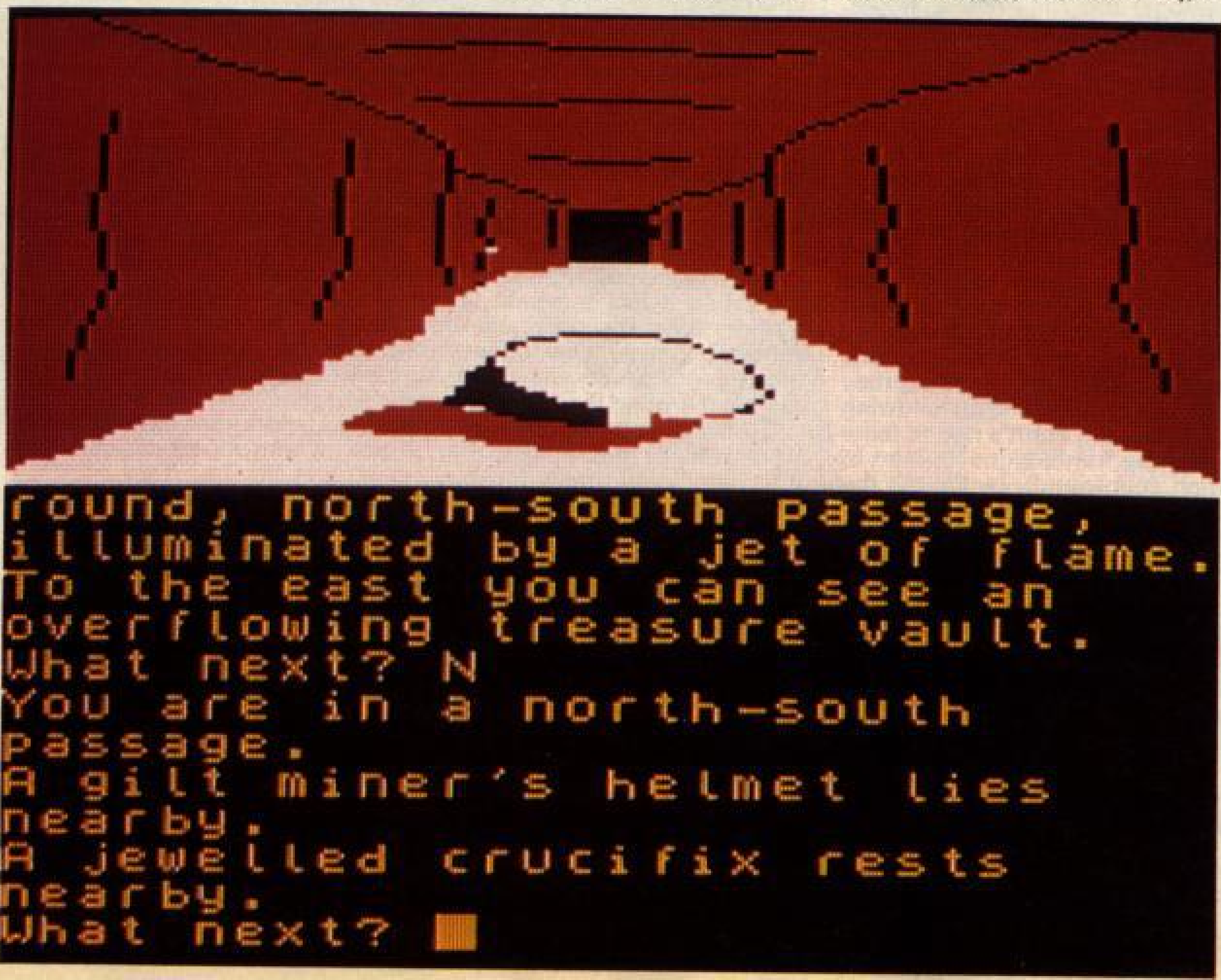
The sophistication which these commands can achieve together when they are linked by punctuation (or simply by the word AND), is quite remarkable. The GET ALL/DROP ALL command can be used with exceptions as in DROP ALL BUT THE LAMP AND SILVER BALL. The command OOPS, which restores the player to the position before the last move on larger machines, is sadly not available on the Spectrum 48K versions!

In addition to the commands to get you back into the game, the programs also give you an option to be resurrected after an untimely death. To obtain a maximum score, and the title of Supreme Adventurer, the player must complete Colossal, Quest, and Dungeon in that order, carrying the score across from one adventure to the next. Each adventure has its own scoring system and objectives, as we shall now see on our tour of the trilogy.

In the first part, *Colossal Adventure*, the player scores points by finding fabulous treasures and carrying them back to the small brick building at the start. If things are going well, and you reach the Colossal Cavern, then you will score more points for entering it. Bonus points are had by making as little use as possible of the SAVE/RESTORE options.

*Colossal* has you cast as the chap who takes pity on a weary traveller who stops by at your local tavern, and then goes on to free the goodly elves imprisoned in the deep dark dungeons at the end of your quest. The traveller is grateful for your helping him avoid the bandits who would have his money, but instead of proffering you some of his new found wealth, he allows you the chance of searching out your own at the cave which locals have put down as a myth. He gives you a map showing the location of the Colossal Cavern, and you decide to chance all and follow it - over mountains, through forests, and past deserts until nearing the cave, you foolishly lose the map in a fast-flowing stream. You must now make your own way to the cavern remembering what the traveller told you - that magic works in the cavern.

In some ways *Colossal* seems the easiest of the trilogy. This may be due to familiarity, or perhaps it's due to the ease of wandering round a great many locations with only a few minor problems to solve. Come to think of it the early part of *Adventure Quest* isn't so difficult either, but perhaps it isn't quite so easy to go as far. Playing both graphic and text versions (the text backs the graphics side of the tape), I noticed that not only is the text side wordier, but in some ways it is easier. Both prompts and location descriptions become more tangible as their lengths increase. For example, on the graphics side, trying to pick up an object when you already have four, results in 'Your hands are full'. On the text-only side however, this becomes 'Your hands are full, you can't carry anything else unless you drop something first'. This is a simple example of what may well prove more valuable, as the plot thickens and becomes more intractable.





The story behind *Adventure Quest* goes like this. You are an apprentice magician (being under 60 years old) and have taken courses in the three M's (Meditation, Mysticism, and Moneymaking), but you haven't had the opportunity to put theory into practice - until now. You are told 'the base of the demon lord's power has been discovered: he has taken up residence in the Black Tower, on the far edge of the world. Even now the full council is preparing an assault on its defences. But there is a second way. Perhaps one person, acting alone, can find the four Stones-of-the-Elements and use them to enter the tower. There the Amulet-of-Life might help defeat the Demon. As you leave the room you think you hear the shouted order 'Next!'. Dressed in travel clothes you are teleported to a familiar scene.

You score points by getting nearer to the Demon Lord's Black Tower, and more for possessing any of the four Stones-of-the-Elements. There are bonus points for entering the tower itself and winning the adventure. On the debit side, you lose points as time goes by, and more if you manage to get yourself killed. Using SAVE/RESTORE regularly will keep you on your way in what is an epic journey.

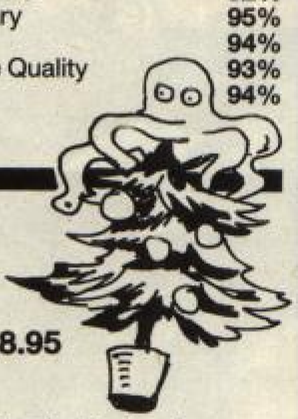
The concluding game of the trilogy, *Dungeon Adventure*, goes like this. You awake on a mudbank under a bridge spanning a wide river. Apparently you were robbed and your body left for dead in the river but a current took you to the shore. However lucky you may fell at being alive, all your weapons and magic powers, are lost.

To score points you must collect treasures left by the late Demon Lord and take them to the store room. There are bonuses for getting rid of undesirable beings (though, to prevent massacre, only the worst enemies give you a bonus score). Getting yourself killed, as usual, loses valuable points. Resurrection is possible, and uses a machine which is initially situated very close to the start of the game. The setting for *Dungeon Adventure* is a cave network which was originally the headquaters of the Demon Lord. Some parts are now blocked off by rock falls, but it may help you to bear in mind the original functions of the accessible areas.

Jewels of Darkness is a classic trilogy and a collectors item for connoisseurs and laymen alike. Given the untold damage to the market, in terms of unimaginative structures and stories, wreaked by the Quill, these programs are at once a return to traditional adventuring and a breath of fresh air. Only allowing the carriage of four objects in the first two games seems unnecessarily restricting, and makes maze-mapping difficult. The bunched up text can be difficult to separate when reading and perhaps a bit of colour within the text wouldn't have gone amiss. The long, atmospheric location descriptions, the clever and entertaining plot, and the super way the whole thing is dished up, makes this package one to remember.

**Difficulty:** easy to quite puzzling
**Graphics:** nothing special but colourful enough
**Presentation:** average, but at least the colours are restful
**Input facility:** beyond verb/noun
Response: fast General rating: super entertainment

| | |
|---|---|
| Atmosphere | **92%** |
| Vocabulary | **95%** |
| Logic | **94%** |
| Addictive Quality | **93%** |
| **Overall** | **94%** |



# KWAH!

Producer: **Melbourne House** Price: **£8.95**
Authors: **Simon Price & Mike Lewis**

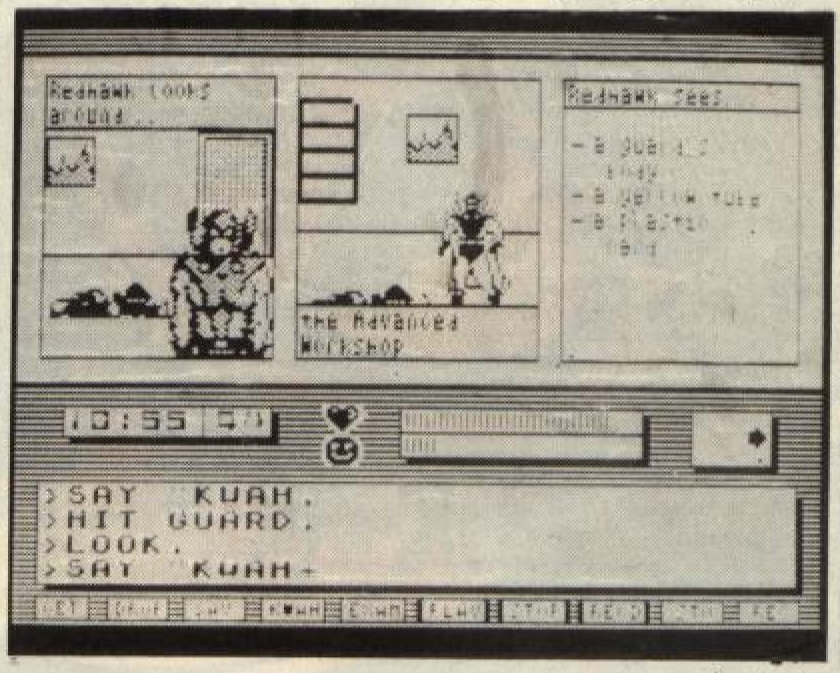
Although the title of this game is *Kwah!*, perhaps the loading screen title of Kwah? is more to the point. The game is too unfriendly to be linked with mainstream adventuring, requiring a very precise and linear solution pathway to be followed to completion. The game however is slick, the graphics very well done, and it does allow all the usual adventure inputs, so what the heck - until someone can say just what this game is I might as well review it here.

The story here concerns an unlikely hero, Kevin, who transmutes into the superhero Redhawk who, naturally enough, can fly. But as the story goes, he is unable to do this at the start of the plot - due to some forcefield around the gates of the Lee Rehabilitation Centre on the outskirts of the city. Kevin, who seems to be a journalist onto his own story, goes there armed with tape recorder and press card to find out what happened to him before he lost his memory.

The game commences at 10:27am, and the seconds slowly tick away as you work out what to do with Redhawk at the gates of the Lee Centre. Along the bottom of the screen the game reveals its links to the adventure world: GET, DROP, SAY, KWAH, EXAM, PLAY, STOP, RECD, STO (for STORE), REC (for RECALL) are accessed via Symbol Shift and the numeral keys along the top of the keyboard. Nos 3 and 4 together come up with SAY KWAH, and in this way Redhawk can change to Kevin and vice versa. PLAY, STOP, RECD refer to tape recorder operations, the rewinding of the tape apparently deemed unnecessary when playing back! STO AND RECALL aren't mentioned in the instructions I received but presumably have something to do with RAM SAVE.

Input is not only achieved by using the keywords provided, but also by typing out words as in any adventure. The language needed to achieve any action is very narrow, or to put it another way, compared to most adventures this game is very unfriendly.

The strength of Kwah! as a game lies in its cartoon strip graphics







along the top half of the screen. The three pictures in the seriel are very well done and very true to the atmosphere of a cartoon comic. If you input for a character to say something (even if it's rude), up it will come in that characters speech bubble. Inside the Lee Centre good old Doctor Lee says 'Welcome Mr Oliver', and then, 'Follow me'. Kevin follows Lee until he stops and says 'Well then. . . . '. This is where the game slows a bit, but there is a way of speeding it up. If you type in WAIT the program flicks through a great wad of comic strips in quick succession, each one with the print 'Time passes' on it. Direction arrows point out the exits at the present location. Should you input something it doesn't understand, and you'd have to be a genius not to do this every other move, then the program stops counting down time until you press SPACE.

Kwah! is a very unusual game. It will not appeal greatly to mainstream adventure enthusiasts, but will strongly appeal to comic strip fans. Once you accept the games limited vocabulary, you can then sit back and enjoy a highly original and graphically pleasing game.

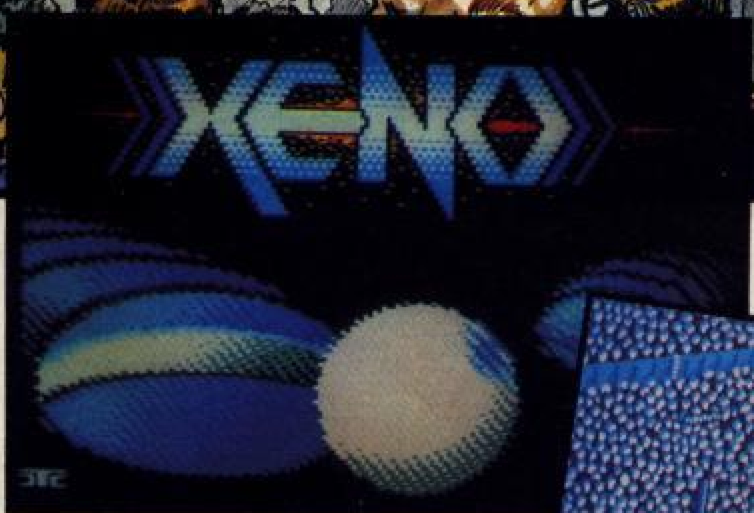
**Difficulty:** difficult
**Graphics:** excellent
**Presentation:** excellent
Input facility: **sentences and keywords**
Response: **type-ahead/immediate**
General rating: **unusual, highly polished game**

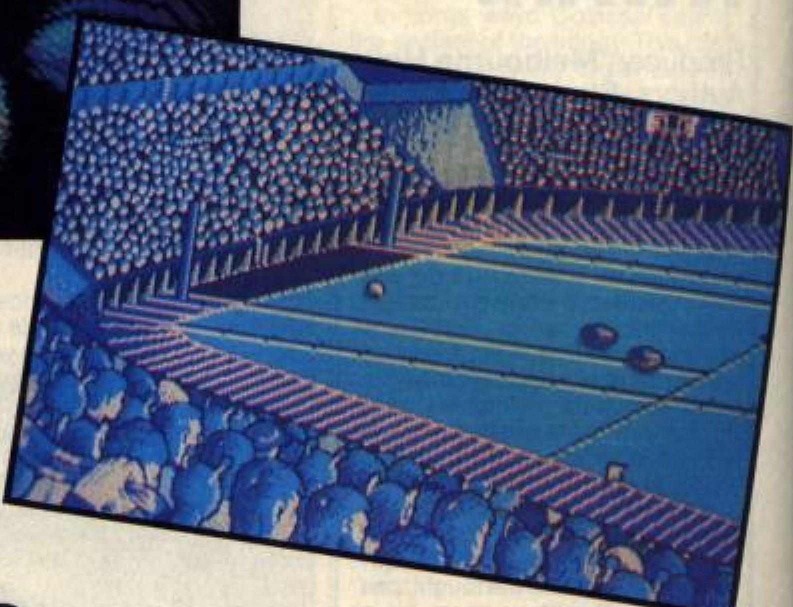
| | |
|---|---|
| Atmosphere | **95%** |
| Vocabulary | **67%** |
| Logic | **69%** |
| Addictive quality | **88%** |
| **Overall** | **86%** |

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# ADVENTURE

Producer: **Adventure Software**
Price: **£1.99**
Author: Nigel Brooks



Believe it or not, this game is based on THAT famous mainframe original. To the author's credit, this game has a third more locations, a completely new 30 location introduction, and is 100% machine code with over 50% compression of the memory used up to house the text (whew!). Further, the vocabulary is developed enough to take on board the sophisticated GET ALL and DROP ALL commands, and location descriptions can be FULL or BRIEF. All the major problems have been reworked, and a great many of the old locations have improved and expanded text. Add to this a new 'end game' and you begin to wonder why the game didn't cut any remaining links and call itself by a totally new name!

It is Summer. You are a lowly farmhand on ditch-digging duty while everyone else is gathering the harvest. Suddenly you uncover a buried casket. Inside you find some keys, a map and the mildewy remains of a book. It is the journal of an uncelebrated, but clearly successful explorer.

Apart from the opening, much of this adventure is the same as *Colossal*. I've left the best of this adventure to last. What makes any adventure special is the amount of real effort put into making the gameplay more interesting, and in this adventure much thought has been brought to bear on old adventuring ways. Most interesting is the way in which the game has tackled the much-maligned problem of object carrying. Clothes may be REMOVED or WORN, objects are weighted (eg a nugget counts as two weights), and to add a degree of realism, pockets have been added to the clothes whereby PUT KEYS sees the keys, or any other pocket-sized item, safely in your pocket. I must admit I couldn't work out how to get the keys back out of the pocket without dropping them - a most inelegant solution, but no doubt this is only a minor omission from the instructions. Other refinements include a GET ALL which doesn't work in the dark, FULL and BRIEF location descriptions, full versions creating a new location as this is a feature to get the adventurer quickly used to the terrain, and five instant RAM SAVES, which come in very useful.

*Adventure* is the most unoriginal name of the whole bunch, and on the face of it another version of *Colossal* is the last thing we want. Adventure Software, 21 Ditchling Rise, Brighton BN1 4BQ.

**Difficulty:** playable
**Graphics:** none at all
Presentation: very readable redesigned character set, and that's about it
**Input facility:** verb/noun
**Response:** fast
**General rating:** interesting

| | |
|---|---|
| Atmosphere | 88% |
| Vocabulary | 76% |
| Logic | 86% |
| Addictive quality | 79% |
| **Overall** | **84%** |

# SHREWSBURY KEY

Producer: **Players**
Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Mark Gipson**




Shrewsbury Key is a reasonable graphic adventure with a novel storyline. The game has you start at York Railway Station and it's up to you to navigate your way to Shrewsbury, making use of the train 'The Shrewsbury Key' to start your journey. The reason for going to Shrewsbury is to find the fabled, diamond encrusted Golden Key which lies there.

There are two things I'd like to point out straight away about this game, in order to save a lot of frustration. In the instructions the game warns that it is verb/noun only, and you'd better believe it. At one stage when I was told to catch a lift, I tried CATCH A LIFT with no success, but CATCH LIFT did the trick. The second thing to be aware of is the exacting requirements set on input. You can get away with EXAM for EXAMINE, but words like TICKET must be spelt out in full, although thankfully, words such as WHEELBARROW can be shortened to WHEEL.

If an awkwardness in language wasn't enough, then the plot can be pretty confusing too. At the rough wooden fence outside York station. Examining the fence gives 'The fence has a small hole which could easily be made bigger', and on KICKing the fence, 'The fence has a hole big enough to squeeze through'. But try as you might there is no way the program is going to let you through it, even after all that encouragement.

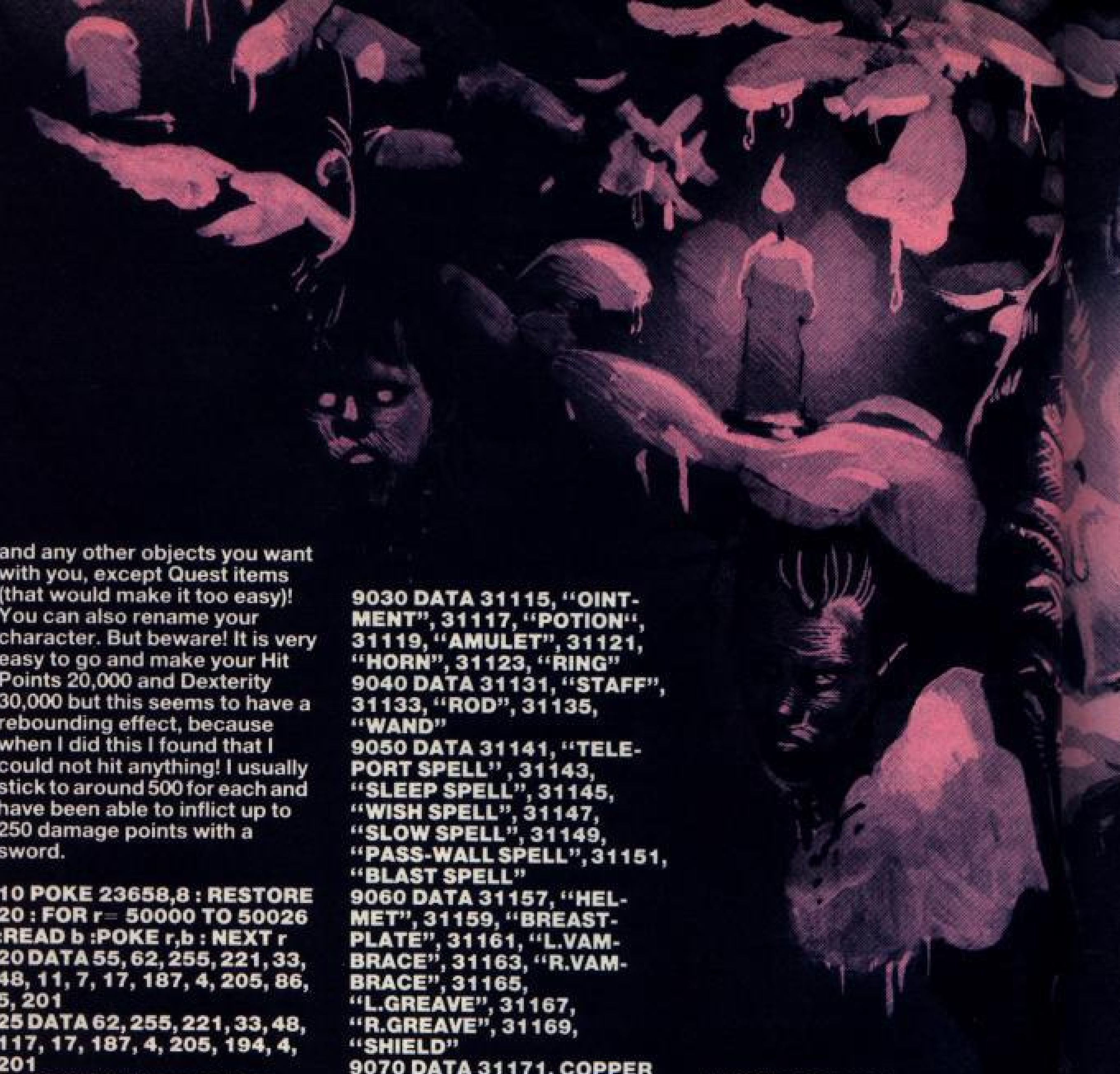
It is in fact possible to complete the game without going this way, and if this is true then I take a very dim view of the tease which had me almost smashing my computer in frustration. Of the two bins in the story, the first bin can be SEARCHed, but the second cannot for some unknown reason. On this occasion, as in so many others, the replies are less than helpful.

The logic of gamesplay is not good either, what with a storekeeper accepting a sneaker in exchange for a trowel. Or how about the Wheelbarrow which you buy for £30, which should leave a £20 cheque for the store (a curious way of receiving change from a store in the first place). But on checking your inventory the cheque is £30 - with no explanation as to why it should have suddenly increased in value. There are many examples of where the plot isn't quite zany enough to be amusing, but it is annoyingly quirksome enough to get you irritated.

*Shrewsbury Key* isn't too bad for the asking price, although the pictures are simple, they are at least colourful, and the character set has been redesigned. Slightly annoying is the program's insistence on the first key entry being used as a signal for the rest of the location description to scroll up, therefore you sometimes look up to the screen to see the first letter of your input missing. Even when you learn to avoid this the program still runs more slowly because of it. The story is a bit thin, as is gamesplay.

**Difficulty:** easy
**Graphics:** cheap but colourful
**Presentation:** alright
**Input facility:** verb/noun
**Response:** average
**General rating:** cheap

| | |
|---|---|
| Atmosphere | 72% |
| Vocabulary | 68% |
| Logic | 65% |
| Addictive quality | 70% |
| Overall | 68% |



*I start this month's Signpost with an unusual event for me. Yes, I've actually managed to hold on to one of those really long letters so I can give you the second half. The letter in question is the one criticising Gareth (I'll leave his second name to persons who can be bothered to look up old issues - so as not to embarrass the poor chap any further) for his erroneous tips on Journey's End.*

## TIPSTER TRASHED

Dear Derek
If you are attacked by rats, and one of your party has a +2 or a more magic sword, put only him in the front line. He will get 3 stabs at the rats before they even get a chance to attack, and as one stab is usually sufficient to see off a rat, he will never even get a scratch (this is a bit slow but very effective). Also, don't use a shield spell for rats as they don't use anything that you would want to be shielded from. Don't stay on hunting mode or it will take you 3 times as long to get to the castle, you will be attacked 3 times as often, and be dead 3 times as quick! About the only thing on which I agree with Gareth is the advice 'Don't use the teleports in the castle'. It is a bad idea to write in with hints if you haven't finished an adventure, as many have a twist in the tail. I am guilty of this myself, having got halfway through The PRICE OF MAGICK and excitedly sent in tips to various magazines, that on completion of the adventure turned out to be only 60% right. Fortunately, they were never published, so I don't have to walk the streets with a bag over my head!

**Carl Young, Nottingham**

***Right, anyone seen walking down the street with a bag over his bonce is probably a Gareth, if the conclusion of this letter is to be taken literally. More importantly, I forgot to give the name of last month's £20 software prize and . . . wait for it.. guess what, it went to you Carl for putting this Gareth chappie in his place. Any more tips from Gareth will be vetted and then no doubt, thrown in the bin along with all the unimaginative Quilled games I receive every month.***

***DB***

## OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Dear Derek,
I have recently acquired OUT OF THE SHADOWS and enjoyed it thoroughly. However, my brother could not get anywhere and kept getting himself killed by rats and wolves - never mind dragons and belrogs! So I decided to write a program to make it easier. Just type in the after-mentioned program and you will be able to choose your Hit Points, Strength, Dexterity, and any other objects you want with you, except Quest items (that would make it too easy)! You can also rename your character. But beware! It is very easy to go and make your Hit Points 20,000 and Dexterity 30,000 but this seems to have a rebounding effect, because when I did this I found that I could not hit anything! I usually stick to around 500 for each and have been able to inflict up to 250 damage points with a sword.

```
10 POKE 23658,8 : RESTORE
20 : FOR r= 50000 TO 50026
:READ b :POKE r,b : NEXT r
20 DATA 55, 62, 255, 221, 33,
48, 11, 7, 17, 187, 4, 205, 86,
5, 201
25 DATA 62, 255, 221, 33, 48,
117, 17, 187, 4, 205, 194, 4,
201
30 PRINT "INSERT SAVED
OUT OF THE SHADOWS GAME
AND PRESS PLAY"
40 RANDOMIZE USR 50000
50 DIM N$(16) : INPUT "WHAT
DO YOU WANT TO CALL YOUR
CHARACTER?"; LINE N$
60 FOR R=1 TO 16 :POKE
31013+R,CODE N$(R) : NEXT
R
70 RESTORE 9000 :FOR L+1
TO 44 :READ AD,O$ :PRINT AT
10,0;"HOW MANY"; O$ ;"S",
,AT 11,0 "DO YOU WANT?
(MAX 65535)"
80 INPUT LINE A$ :IF A$ + ""
OR LEN A$>5 THEN GOTO 80
90 FOR R + 1 TO LEN A$ :IF
A$(R) <"0"OR A$(R) > "9"
THEN GOTO 80
100 NEXT R :LET A + VAL A$
:LET N2 + INT (A/256) : LET N1
+A - N2 * 256 :POKE AD, N1 :
POKE AD + 1, N2 :NEXT L
110 BEEP 1,0 :PRINT "START
TAPE AND PRESS ANY KEY"
120 IF INKEY$ <> "" THEN
GOTO 120
130 IF INKEY$ + "" THEN
GOTO 130
140 RANDOMIZE USR 50014
150 INPUT "ANOTHER GO?
(Y/N)"; LINE A$ :IF A$ + "N"
THEN RANDOMIZE USR 0
160 GOTO 50
9000 DATA 31051,"HIT
POINT", 31079,"STRENGTH
POINT", 31081, "DEXTERITY
POINT"
9010 DATA 31091, "DAG-
GER", 31093, "CLUB",
31095,"MACE", 31097,
"AXE", 31099, "SWORD"
9020 DATA 31101, "LAN-
TERN", 31103, "TINDER-
BOX", 31105, "KEY", 31107,
"OIL", 31109, "FOOD PACK",
31111, "TORCH", 31113,
"MARKER"
9030 DATA 31115, "OINT-
MENT", 31117, "POTION",
31119, "AMULET", 31121,
"HORN", 31123, "RING"
9040 DATA 31131, "STAFF",
31133, "ROD", 31135,
"WAND"
9050 DATA 31141, "TELE-
PORT SPELL", 31143,
"SLEEP SPELL", 31145,
"WISH SPELL", 31147,
"SLOW SPELL", 31149,
"PASS-WALL SPELL", 31151,
"BLAST SPELL"
9060 DATA 31157, "HEL-
MET", 31159, "BREAST-
PLATE", 31161, "L.VAM-
BRACE", 31163, "R.VAM-
BRACE", 31165,
"L.GREAVE", 31167,
"R.GREAVE", 31169,
"SHIELD"
9070 DATA 31171, COPPER
COIN", 31173, "SILVER
COIN", 31175, "GOLD COIN"
9080 DATA 31177, "AMETH-
YST", 31179, "EMERALD",
31181, "OPAL", 31183,
"RUBIE", 31185,
"DIAMOND"
```

## MASTER OF MAGIC

Dear Derek,
I shall start at the best possible place for my solution to Master of Magic, the beginning, and take you through the adventure step by step.

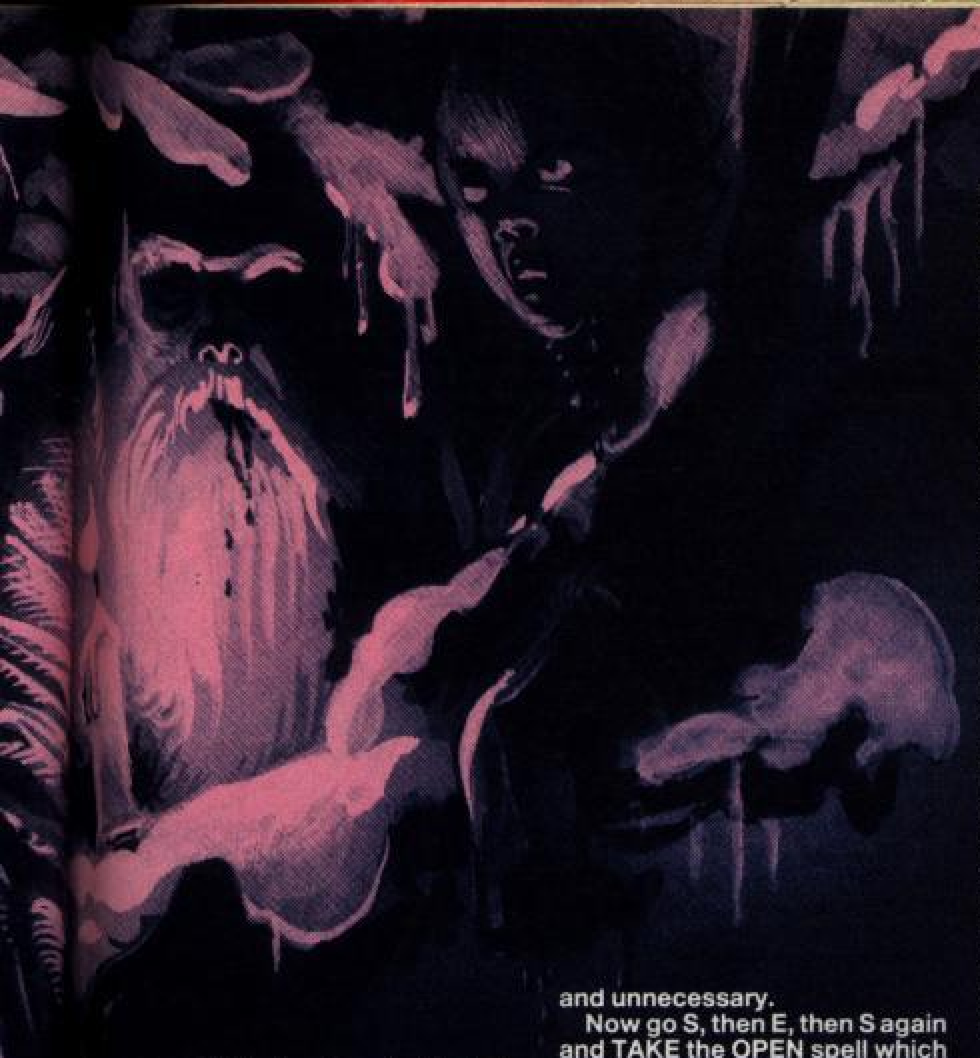
First, lure the skeleton into the passageway at the beginning, then destroy it with magic (a missile is best), then take the dagger. Now, to collect the mace you must go East, North, South, East, North. There destroy orc and pick up the mace (NB whatever weapon you want to attack with must be in your right hand).

Next, get the healing potion. Now, from where you got the mace go South, West, South, East, Down (through the door) then follow the passageway. Kill the snake and the potion is in the corner. (If you can't pick it up discard the dagger, you don't need it). Go back to the door. The next item to collect is the backpack. From the door go East, South, West, North, kill the bat, go upstairs, through one door, then through another, go West, destroy the skeleton if it appears. You then come to three passageways. Go along the bottom one, down the steps and into the room, kill the spider and wear the backpack.

The next items are the shield, helmet, and wooden dagger. Go back to the three passageways and then go through the middle one up the steps. This leads to a large area which is populated by an orc (carrying a wooden dagger), three skeletons (one with a helmet, another with the shieid) and four hellhounds. Destroy the orc and skeletons but leave the hellhounds, they're not worth the trouble.

Now you should have a mace in your right hand and a shield in your left. You are wearing a helmet and backpack and in the backpack are a scroll, a potion and a dagger. The next paraphenalia to collect are the sword and some potion. Go South-East from the steps to the pool, then go East to the other steps, go Down, then West. You are then confronted with 2 doors opposite each other. Go through the North door first, then West, then North, kill the spider, follow the passageway North until you come across an orc. Destroy him but leave the dagger, carry on East, South, East, East, North, through the door, then destroy the orc and pick up the axe and the potion labelled Alumrof Ecnegillenti Artxe, discard the mace and put the potion in your backpack.

Return to the main passageway with 2 doors, then go through the South door, carry on South until you've reached the bottom, go West then North, then destroy the skeleton. Now pick up the sword and potion of healing (N.B. use the potions whenever your strength is really low, otherwise try to conserve



them). Watch out for the fireball throwing wizard.

The penultimate objects to collect are the dagger of death and the armour (go back to the beginning, then from there proceed North, kill the bat, West, you then come to passageway of three steps, go along the bottom one. If a spider appears kill it, swap your sword for a wooden dagger, follow the passageway - the vampire should be in the bottom room. Destroy the vampire, pick up the dagger of death and put that and the wooden dagger in your backpack. Take out your sword, then go East then South, go through the lower passageway, then go South, destroy the orc, then wear the armour.

**Chris Hunt, Gwent**

## MINDSTONE

Dear Derek, Here is a complete solution to The Edge's MINDSTONE, reviewed by you in CRASH No 33 last month.

There are a few minor subplots which I have not bothered to detail as they only involve trading, fighting, bartering etc, in ways that are not essential to the main storyline. This is a complete solution, so anyone who does not want the entire game given away should take care not to read the final paragraphs.

Starting off in the bar at Elantor, have Merel DRINK. This will increase his strength points by twenty (handy for later bloody encounters). This bar is badly stocked, there is only one glass of one drink available, so leave and visit the village store (on the way PICK UP the spade which you'll find lying in the street). In the store BUY a Thief's Toolkit. There is lots more stuff on offer but you don't really need it, and it's important to conserve your gold pieces.

You can visit the village mystic if you like, but don't bother buying his Zap spell - it's expensive and unnecessary.

Now go S, then E, then S again and TAKE the OPEN spell which you will find there. Travel N and E. Have Taina CAST the OPEN spell to remove the boulder which blocks your way. (It's best to put Taina in charge of spell casting as she has the highest Psyche). Go E, into the Snake's Cave. PICK UP the Psyche Ring, which can be used once only to replenish a character's waning Psyche. To use the ring MEDITATE.

Don't waste time killing the snake, it just takes vital strength points. DROP the OPEN spell; you won't need it again.

Go W, S, E, into the Foothills where you will find a Drum. Leave it where it is, it's just excess baggage with no useful purpose whatsoever.

Now go E to the Crossroads then N. A pixie will offer you a Royal Orb for 38 gold pieces. Give him 33 and he'll part with it. Go E and N to the Marsh and have Merel ATTACK the leopard that's waiting there. (This will cost him 30 strength points, but what's that to a hulk like Merel?). Now go N then W and take the LIGHT spell. Go E, ignoring the voyager who will sell you a totally useless Holy Arrow if you let him.

Carry on W, then S to the Plain, then S, E, N into a Forest Glade. Here you can TRADE your Orb with an Elf. In exchange he will give you a Tiger Amulet. Return to the Crossroads.

Go S and have big Merel ATTACK the crocodile at a cost of 35 strength points. Merel will be down to 6 strength points by now, so don't let him get into any more scraps until you've replenished his strength later on. Otherwise it'll be curtains for the big fella.

Go W and PICK UP the lump of lead. Go S, to Riverside and TAKE the FIREBALL spell.

Return to the Forest Glade where you traded with the Elf, and keep going E until you reach the entrance to The Icelands. Here CAST the FIREBALL spell and melt the wall of ice that's hindering your progress. DROP the FIREBALL spell.

Go E, then N, and enter the Ice Hall. PICK UP the Clock. Continue E, N, E, and have either Prince Kyle or Quin ATTACK the wolf (cost is 10 str.). PICK UP the Magic Ring which the wolf will drop. There's a hungry polar bear in the near vicinity, but if you meet him don't grapple. He's just there to steal your strength.

Now about heel and return to Riverside. Go W, into the Cavehouse. The caver will offer to show you a tunnel, for a price, but don't take him up on it yet. Instead, travel W, to the Orc's Kingdom. Have Quin ATTACK the Orc Guard (-34 str).

S, W and N will bring you to the Orc's Village. W, then S, and PICK UP a second Psyche Ring. Now N, and N again, to the Orc Castle. Here there's an ALCHEMY spell to be taken. Let whoever is carrying the lead take the spell, then CAST it for instant replenishment of your gold supply. Keep the ALCHEMY spell as it can be used again later.

Go back to The Cavehouse. It's a good idea to SAVE the game at this point. I'll explain why in a minute.

The caver wants 59g to show you the tunnel, but he'll take 55. You are now in Kranos. Whatever you do, don't go N or you'll be back in the Cavehouse where a grinning caver will demand another 59g for the privilege of taking you back to Kranos again. At this stage, if you've not been taking care with your gold you may find that you don't have 59 pieces left, in which case it's GAME OVER for all who didn't SAVE when they should have.

In Kranos go W to the Shadowlord's Fort. TAKE the DESTROY spell. Now go E, and E again to find yourself in the bar at Kranos. Remarkable place this. Everyone can drink and keep drinking until their individual strength points have been replenished to a maximum of 200 (enough to get you through the rest of the quest). Even better, nobody falls down sloshed.

Leave the bar, going W, S, W, to the Sorcerer's Castle. He will trade you your Tiger Amulet for a Talisman. Now go E and use the Thief's Toolkit to open the locked door to the south. PICK UP the Bible and go E, and further E onto a road.

Go E and E again to the Gold Mountains. There's some food lying around here which may be useful for extra strength, should you decide to do some extracurricular fighting further along the way.

Go N and ATTACK the warrior (-27 str), then N again into the Dwarves' Mine. DIG with the spade and your gold will be replenished. DROP the spade. S and W will lead you to a RESTORE spell, useful if anyone dies (which won't happen if you have closely followed these instructions). Go S, W, S, to the Doomgate which is locked. USE the Talisman to unlock it and go S, into Nemesar's Kingdom. Here you can ATTACK a Giant Sandworm if you wish (though it's not necessary) at a cost of 70 strength points, the worm will then drop a Book of Spells. Go S then E to Mindhenge and USE the Bible to destroy the chanting Devil Worshipper. Go E, E, E, E, and meet a fisherman who will sell you something. If you're loaded and want a little laugh (at your expense), take him up on it.

N takes you to the entrance to the Ancient City. A goblin will charge you 41g to get in, but if you're clever you can get away with 36. Go E, and S to an Ancient Temple; E and ATTACK the Minotaur (-26 str). E once more will bring you to the Fountain of Youth where one person may DRINK and gain 20 extra strength points. Now go back to the entrance to the city and go N, then E where a Wood Elf will trade a Torch for your Clock. Now go W, and N to a tunnel where you'll need to USE the torch. N, E, and N again will take you to a Riverside (not the same one as earlier). There's some lead here, so if you are low on gold, CAST the ALCHEMY spell. Now DROP the spell as you no longer need it. Go N and N again. Ignore the mind vampire and he, in return, will ignore you, letting you pass E unhindered. In the field ATTACK the ghoul (-20 str). Go E to the Dwarf Kingdom, then E, and E once more, giving a cold shoulder to the blue Dwarf who wants to trade with you. S and W takes you to a Dwarf's Cabin where a Strength Potion may be bought from an old Dwarf if any of your party is feeling weak (provided, that is, your purse is still bulging).

N, W and S brings you onto the Carokot road and the end of the quest is now in sight.

Go S, then E to the bar in Carokot where a Deserter will sell you a Back Door Pass. You don't really need this as long as your strength is high, and it should be.

Go E, then E again, and TRADE your Book of Spells (if you have one) with a wizard who will pay you handsomely. Now go W, S, S, E, through the desert where another Psyche Ring may be found, and E once more to the Front Door of Nemesar's Palace (if you bought the Pass you can go S and E again to the Back Door). ATTACK the Shadowlord barring the entrance (-50 str). Go E into the palace and a dim, cold room. Go W and ATTACK the Fire Dragon (-74 str), then N, and do the same to the Mantagore in his passage (-63 str). N once more takes you to Mephistopheles (-70 str).

Go N again and you are face to face with Nemesar and the Mindstone. If you've followed these instructions, and not gone off attacking every other baddie and beastie littering the landscape, you will have ample strength points left to finish off Nemesar, thus taking the Mindstone and freeing the world from the clutches of an evil, violent and wart-covered tyrant.

**Phil Williamson, London NW1**

***Well done, Phil, for these tips you receive this month's £20 software prize.***

***DB***



# SIGN STUMPS

***There's a lot of queries to answer this month, so without any further ado lets get onto the first question.***

***After 3 years, it appears that*** THE HOBBIT ***is still going strong.* M. S. Whiting *From New Zealand asks:***

"1. How do you get the Bard to defeat the Dragon?
2. How do you enter the boat and then cross the black river?
3. Where is the key to the cache and how do you enter the cache?
4. Can you go to Gollum's Island?
5. Where is Beorn?
6. How do you enter and escape the web?
7. What do you say to Gollum when he asks 'What has it got in its pockets?'?
8. What is the gold key for?"

***Don't blame me if any of these answers are wrong, I haven't played the game for over a year.***
***1. SAY TO BARD "SHOOT DRAGON"***
***2. THROW ROPE ONTO BOAT then PULL ROPE CAREFULLY***
***3. Nothing can be done with the goblin's cache***
***4. I don't think you can go to the island***
***5. I haven't seen Beorn when I've played the game***
***6. CUT WEB WITH SWORD***
***7. It's best simply to kill Gollum***
***8. Just points I think!***

**Mick Brophy *of Stockport is playing*** CONQUEST ***and asks:***

"Could you please tell me what the following do: balls, stars, talismans, amulets, the Egyptian looking sphinx thingy! and clocks and coffins?"

***The balls should be placed on the correct colour pedestals to open the portcullis. The stars are used at the end of the game to protect from evil, read the Book of Legend for more detail. There are two different amulets and two different talismans. One protects from snake bites, one stops the gremlins stealing treasures, one halves the damage done by nasties whilst the other doubles it. The Idol denotes areas of evil. The clocks and coffins are purely decoration.***

**Scott Maddy *of Lainden, Essex writes:***

"In HAMPSTEAD I have Pippa, given documents to Chubby, have a car and deeds to a cottage. Where is the cottage? Can you help me finish the game?"

***When Chubby asks you what you want to do say NBSSZ QJQQB. After giving him the reports go back to the Oxfam shop and change back into the tracksuit. Remove the tie, get the bike and ride with Pippa across Hampstead Heath into Hampstead.***

**S. Field *from London is finding difficulty with*** PRICE OF MAGIK ***and asks:***

"What is XAM used for? Is there any way to get the wheel in the misty room? What use is the Valerian plant? How do you get the sword out of the ceiling?"

***XAM needs the QSJTN as a focus, it gives information about the magic properties of the target. The WBNQJSF CBU will help you with the wheel. The Valerian plant is used with the GJY TQFMM.***

**Ted Webb *of Waterlooville, Hants, is having problems with CRL's*** VERY BIG CAVE ADVENTURE ***and asks:***

How do I climb the triffid without being eaten? Also, how do I avoid Jeff Minter on the bridge and how do I get past the Contribution plate gate?"

***To kill the Triffid EJBM QBSBRVBU on the utility belt. To pass the hairy figure HJWF RFDPSE from the giant room. To open the gate ESPQ QJFDF of plate.***

**Raui Sriniuasan *of Epsom, Surrey writes:***

"You've got to help me! After ages of fruitless toil, I can't get onto the ferry in LORD OF THE RINGS. In desperation I bought the BOGGIT and played that brilliant spoof instead, only to find I couldn't find the sword!"

***You find the sword in the DBVMESPO, simply DMJNC DBVMESPO. To get Frodo et al onto the ferry, you must first bring it to the correct side of the river by turning the handle 5 times. You can then board the ferry by HFU BCPBSE GFSSZ.***

**John Chaney *from Henley, Oxon asks:***

"Please could you help me in COLDITZ. I can't get the coffin open and I also can't find the other person to give the food to."

***You need the DSPXCBS to open the coffin, with it MFWFS MJE. The person you give the food to is in the jail, but first you must rescue him.***

**Chris Jones *of Formby asks the following questions about*** EUREKA**:**

"ROMAN TIMES - How do you get St Peter to cure your leprosy?
ARTHURIAN BRITAIN - How do you kill the rabbit? (Do you use the silver-tipped spear?)
WAR-TIME GERMANY - How do you use the sewing kit and blankets to make a uniform? How do you get through the minefield?"

***To get St Peter to cure your leprosy give him the SPCF. To pass the rabbit ESPQ DBSSPU. To make a uniform you also need QPMJTI, and finally to get through the minefield VTF CBZPOFU.***

**Tim Sheltom *of Stockport is having difficulty with several adventures and writes:***

"I am a keen, although not particularly good, adventure gamer. There are four games that I have been able to make no headway with for quite some time. Please could you help me in my quests?
1. KENTILLA - How do you turn the gold key to iron?
2. SEAS OF BLOOD - After leaving my ship I cannot manage to get to land, but just stay stranded at sea.
3. TOWER OF DESPAIR - Of the three doors, I cannot get the crystal from the door labelled HOPE.
4. VELNOR'S LAIR - How do you cross the waterfall, and what do you feed the sharks with?"

***To turn the key to iron EJQ LFZ JOUP MJRVJE. Make sure you have removed your gold ring first! To disembark onto dry land you must take your ship adjacent to land then HP BTIPSF. To be able to safely get the sphere you must first XFBS HBVOUMFU. Finally in Velnor you can feed the sharks with EFBE PHSFT. That's it for another month, hope I've been of help. If you've got any questions to ask, or help to give, then please write to: SIGNSTUMPS***
***1/2 KING ST***
***LUDLOW***
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***SY8 1AQ***

## SUPERHERO

***I claim the Superhero title for solving*** AFTERSHOCK ***by Interceptor on Monday 7th of October at 1.05 pm. To finish the game I replaced the missing valve on the pipe and pressed the button in the reactor room. The final screen message tells you that the backup system bursts into life, the core temperature is falling rapidly and the city will rise again from the ashes like a phoenix. Starting tips are to examine the lift to see a panel and then climb onto a chair and remove it, then climb out of the lift. To pass the cables switch off the isolator in the utility room. James Elliott, Alloa.***

[redacted]

## ENSURE YOUR REGULAR COPY OF CRASH

When a magazine is rising in circulation as rapidly as CRASH is doing it tends to sell out immediately and you may experience difficulty in obtaining your copy every month. So the best thing to do is place a regular order with your local newsagent, which you can do by handing him this form.

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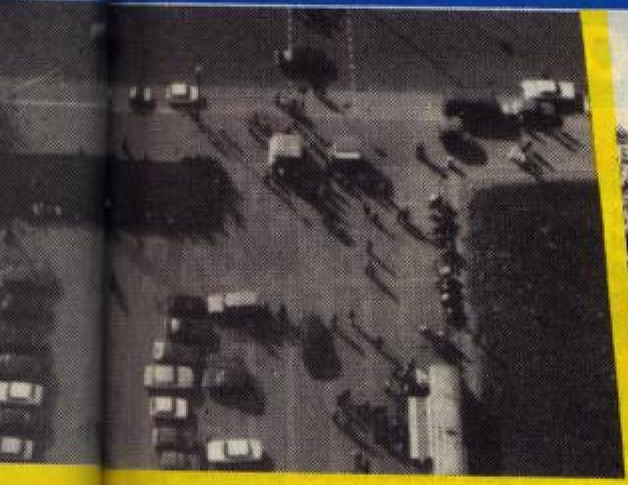
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# PARIS IN THES




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# E SPRINGTIME









## A weekend break for two on offer from French software house INFOGRAMES

Crash Competition

Within a few short months, **INFOGRAMES** have made their mark on the software scene — their talents have been well-known in their home country France for some while, but now games such as *L'Affaire Vera Cruz*, *Mandragore* and *The Inheritance* are available this side of the White Cliffs of Dover. Soon, they will be joined by *The Sydney Affair*.

Seeing as its THAT TIME OF THE YEAR again, (Christmas, in case you hadn't noticed) **INFOGRAMES** would like to treat a lucky CRASH reader and a companion to a bit of sightseeing in La Belle France. They are going to pay for the winner's return flight from either Gatwick or Heathrow to the Charles De Gaulle airport in Paris and will cover the cost of three nights' bed and breakfast in a Three Star Paris hotel. What a pleasant springtime break!

All the winner will have to fund is spending money, lunch and dinner — and of course travel from home

So how to you get in with a chance of a Spring weekend in Europe's most romantic city? Well, a bit of research is called for. No, you don't have to translate a great wodge of French inlay instructions for the nice Mr Crosweller who runs things in this country for **INFOGRAMES**, nor are you going to have to wash his car for a year with your tongue.

Scamper down to the library or a travel agency and dig out some books or brochures about Paris. Pore over them, imagining the lovely time you would have if you won this competition. Then jot down an imaginary diary, describing the sights you saw, the places you visited and the things you did during an imaginary weekend in Paris.

Add a few illustrations drawn by your own fair hand or snipped out of a travel brochure if you like, but don't fill more than two A4 pages.

When it's all ticketty boo and complete, send your diary to LA BELLE FRANCE, CRASH TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB making sure it arrives before 20th January.

Everyone who enters will collect a special £3.00 off voucher redeemable against any **INFOGRAMES** game purchased mail-order direct from their UK office. Can't be bad, eh?



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# 1986 PBM MAILBOX





Despite the Xmas postal chaos, Brendon Kavanagh brings news of some new releases and an overview of Saturnalia - a game of quest, exploration and fantasy

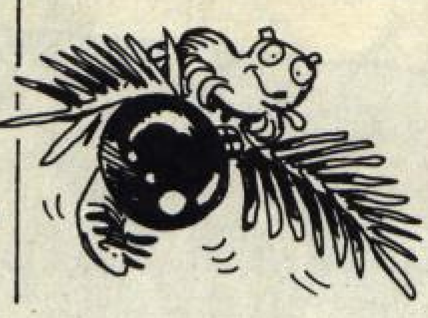
**Christmas is once more upon us, and now the dear old Post Office has upped its postal charges, it is time for the sorting office to hibernate for the winter. This is a cruel time of year for those trying to meet PBM deadlines, let alone keep on top in open ended games, for it takes noticeably longer for those crucial communications to get from A to B and back to A again. Fortunately, GMs are aware of the Chrimble postal delays and deadlines are deferred, allowing addicted PBMers to relax while trying to figure our where to replant this year's Christmas tree . . .**

## DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY

To further the cause of peace and understanding amongst the peoples of the PBM gaming world, CRASH wishes to undertake the task of publishing a DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY in the hope of encouraging diplomatic relations between competing gamers. To become a CRASH DIPLOMAT, simply post your name, address, and details of the games in which you play to: **DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY, PBM MAILBOX, 1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.** I will then enter your details into the DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY for all to read . . .

## YULETIDE COMPETITION

***Okay, all you budding PBM game designers, let us test your imagination by setting you a simple competition. All you have to do is design a two player PBM game that could be run on a standard 48K Spectrum with a printer. We don't want you to actually write the software, or even go as far as flowcharting a program. All we would like you to do, is to write no more than 1,000 words describing:***



- *The Game Scenario*
- *How the printouts would be laid out (ie. how much information would be given per turn)*
- *What the player would do each turn*
- *For how long the game would run*
- *How much memory you think that the game would use*
- *How the game would 'play'*
- *What the game packaging would include*

Prizes will be given for the most original ideas submitted to us by the closing date for entries — 20th January 1987 First prize is a trio of subscriptions: to FLAGSHIP, PBM MAGAZINE and CRASH. We'll throw in two free tickets to the Second British PBM convention at the Porchester Hall, London, on the 7th February 1987.

Eighteen runners-up are set to collect a pair of tickets to the PBM Convention . . .

Get those game ideas in to **PBM COMPETITION, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB**

## SATURNALIA — A GAME OVERVIEW

*Saturnalia* is a low priced, open ended fantasy role playing PBM game run by SLOTH ENTERPRISES of Southampton. The game is set upon the mysterious landmass of Saturnalia which, with its varying climates and wonderous creatures, is something like a cross between Europe, Middle Earth, and CRASH Towers.

*Saturnalia* has no really original features — in fact, as fantasy games go, it has little special about it at all. Having said that, *Saturnalia* fans certainly enjoy their escapades in this game.

The (very good) rulebook is split into simple sections covering religion, economics, magic, combat, scouting and movement.

**Religion** and **Magic** are two very important parts of this game. Your character is recommended to follow one of the land's fourteen not-so-mythical Gods and Goddesses. Following each God has its pros and cons: believing in the Weather God, Somol, may give you fine travelling conditions, but this doesn't help you very much against Destu, God of Darkness! Your choice of religion influences your character's ability to learn various types of spells, so a careful choice of religion proves to be very important if you intend to use a lot of magic in your game, since your character may learn only a limited number of these spells.

**Economics** only enters *Saturnalia* in the crude form of Supply and Demand influencing artefact values. Money exists in various tenders, and is (of course) very valuable - some finance is required to buy tools, food and weaponry for yourself.

When you join *Saturnalia* you are asked to design your character. The first stage of this process is to distribute 250 **Ability Points** among your character's five abilities (combat, magical, vitality, scouting and perception). The higher the weighting, the greater the ability — simple! The second stage is to describe your character's appearance, habits, trade, family background and so on. As the game progresses, all of these variables change. Ability points rise and fall with use/abuse, and your character's description changes, should he (for example) turn away from being a merchant to being a thief. A sixth numerical rating exists for your character — **Fame**. This fluctuates as you do good or bad deeds of varying degrees, and this is a true reflection of your character's honour and compassion!

As in most games, *Saturnalia* features a hexed landscape (with about ten terrain types), an efficient movement system, and a GM-controlled combat method (for which the GM uses such variables as relative abilities, magic, terrain suitabilities, and so on)

*Saturnalia* is a simple but enjoyable game to play. SLOTH ENTERPRISES have run this multi-player game successfully for nearly two years now without any major problems that immediately spring to mind. Start up costs £5.00; this fee also includes the rules and your first five turns. Each turn costs £1.25 thereafter and there are *no* hidden charges. If you enjoy role playing games, you may well enjoy *Saturnalia*.

Drop them a line, enclosing your cheque or Postal Order — **Saturnalia CRASH Startup, SLOTH ENTERPRISES, FREEPOST, P O Box 82, Southampton, Hants, SO9 7FG**

## NEWS AND VIEWS

### FLAGSHIP

At long last, FLAGSHIP 12 is both out AND available (not as daft as it sounds after its printers failed to produce the agreed number of copies — no mince pies for them.) Articles of interest to British readers are features on *Vorcon Wars*, *Capitol*, *Chester-based SF game Rebirth*, and the rapidly expanding *Conquest* game. Issue 12 also includes the regular news pieces and tips pages, as well as a very interesting letters page. **Nicky Palmer** (FLAGSHIP editor) has even been kind enough to give CRASH a mention in his editorial. A four issue FLAGSHIP subscription costs £6.00 from **FLAGSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS, P O BOX 12, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands, WS9 0TJ.**

### NEW GAMES

This Autumn, a fair number of new games have been launched, including the three-player game *Muskets and Mules* (A strategic wargame set in central Europe circa 1800), *St. Valentines Day Massacre* by RAMPAGE GAMES (a more detailed and interesting version of Chicago gangland goings on than *It's a Crime!* although just as controversial and more expensive), and *Monsters and Magic* by SPOTLIGHT GAMES. I shall examine some of these new games more closely in the New Year.

Any which way up, have a Merry Yuletide — I hope you now have a use for the ever present biros and letter writing sets among your Christmas goodies!



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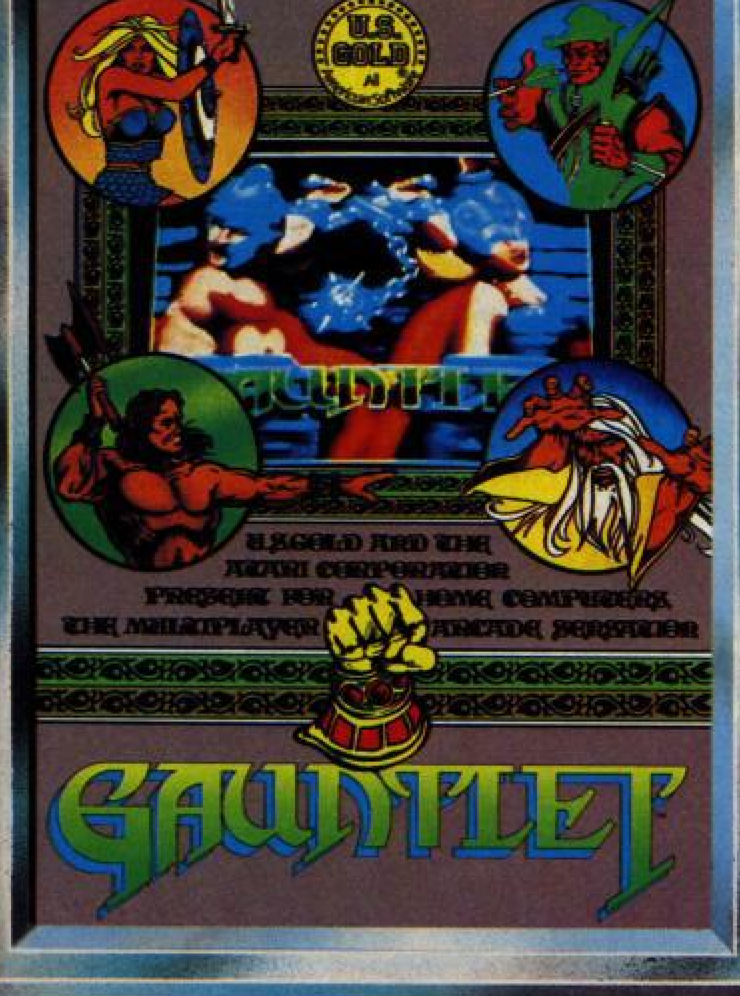



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## BREAKTHRU

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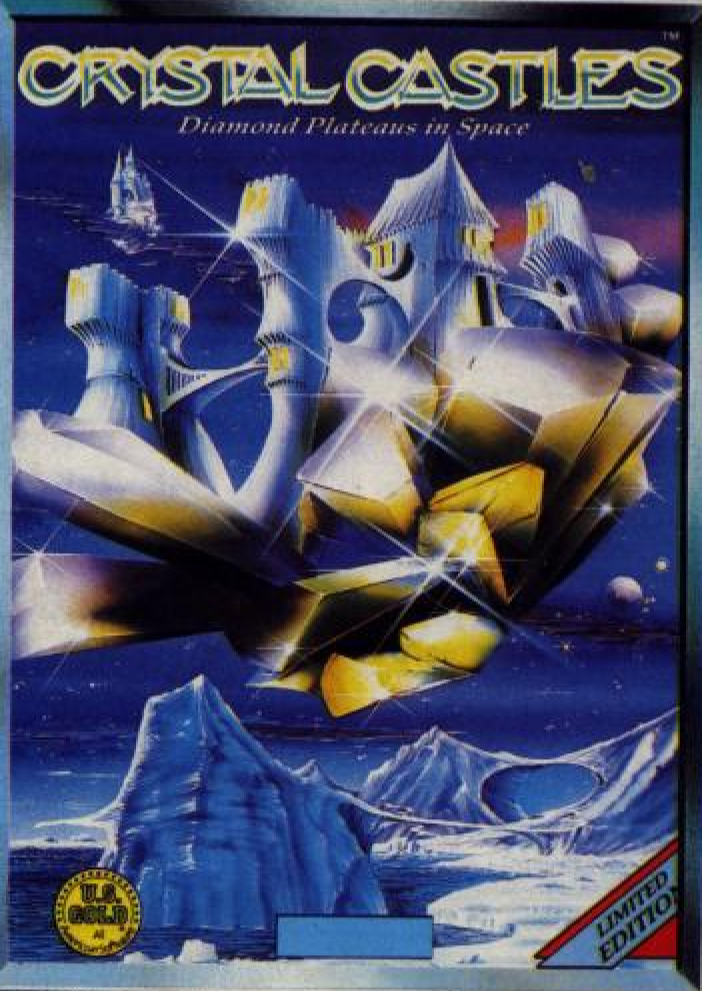


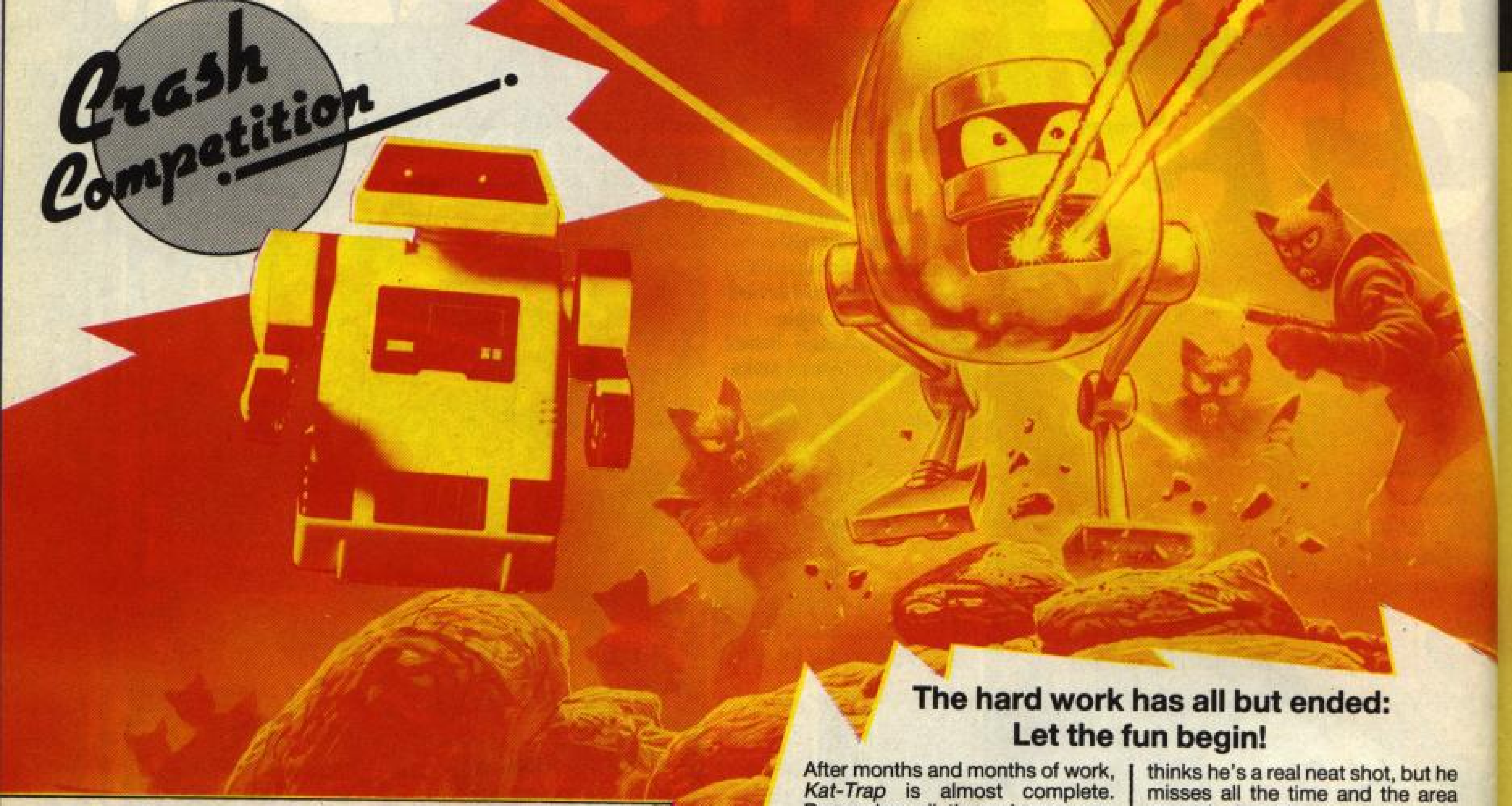

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# Win yourself a FLIPBOT, courtesy of DOMARK

# GENESIS, BIRTH OF A COMPETITION

## The hard work has all but ended: Let the fun begin!

After months and months of work, *Kat-Trap* is almost complete. Remember all those Issues ago when we reported on the meeting in Birmingham when **DAVE CARLOS**, **GRAEME KIDD** from **CRASH**, **MARK STRACHAN** and **DOMINIC WHEATLEY** from **DOMARK** and **GRAHAM STAFFORD** from **DESIGN DESIGN** all met together in a hotel room to decide who had won the **Genesis competition.**

**OLIVER FREY** got together with the chap who sent in the winning game design, **JON EGGELTON**, and between them they developed the design for the game inlay and the artwork.

Programming work started up in Manchester, and any day now the finished game should be in the shops, appearing on the **STREETWISE** label.

Starring M.T.-Ed, an all-purpose terrain exploration droid, the game sees you battling though a host of unpleasant locations, fighting off the Kat Men who have taken over the planet Earth.

There's no doubt about it, the Kat Men are well untidy. Empty tins of giant Kit-E-Kat no doubt litter the landscape, and all sorts of bits of fur and stuff lie around the place. Rather like the CRASH Office after the Girlie Tipster has had ten minutes to untidy-up after the weekly hoovering session. When it comes to lobbing scraps of paper into the bin, Lee Paddon thinks he's a real neat shot, but he misses all the time and the area around the bin is covered in screwed up scraps of "Large Electrical Doobries Monthly" which he insists on reading for sentimental reasons.

That Ben Stone is a messy fellow too. He keeps ripping labels off peoples clothes and scattering them over the floor, saying "That's not designer ... Nor's That. Or that".

And guess who has to clear up after all this mess? Right in one. Yours truly. What I could do with is a little Robot that could follow the CRASH office messy slobs around, tidying up after them. Rather like the **FLIPBOT**s that **DOMARK** are giving away as the 10 super prizes in this competition.

What I'd like you to do is come up with a list of 5 possible names for the Katmen warriors who give old M.T.-Ed such a tough time in the game. Once you've done that, search through the wordsquare to find all the words that appear in this little narrative in **BIG LETTERS** — like those two. Ring round all you can find, and add your Katmen names to the coupon.

Whizz your entry to me at *KAT KOMP, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB* so it arrives here no later than 20th of January. The best 10 entries will win a **FLIPBOT**.

### KAT-TRAP WORD SQUARE

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | S | E | R | A | L | F | S | R | E | A | W | S | Y | R | A | G |
| N | O | O | E | S | E | R | T | O | S | L | V | T | S | Q | N | O |
| T | R | Z | R | T | N | T | V | N | L | R | N | C | R | R | T | O |
| P | O | O | G | R | A | E | M | E | F | A | R | T | Y | O | Y | L |
| R | I | C | F | E | P | K | M | A | H | A | R | G | P | E | P | I |
| B | D | A | V | E | Z | R | L | S | F | G | D | P | R | R | O | A |
| V | R | R | S | T | R | A | C | H | A | N | R | F | R | A | P | G |
| M | E | L | T | W | R | M | S | T | M | N | O | L | T | N | M | P |
| A | H | O | L | I | D | E | S | I | G | N | F | I | N | K | Q | A |
| N | C | S | R | S | N | G | I | S | E | D | F | P | C | E | T | R |
| G | U | D | P | E | T | O | N | O | F | L | A | B | B | Y | S | S |
| R | O | J | O | H | N | E | G | G | E | L | T | O | N | O | N | R |
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| B | O | Z | I | E | O | N | I | C | H | S | N | E | D | S | O | L |

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MY SUGGESTIONS FOR NAMES FOR THE KAT MEN ARE

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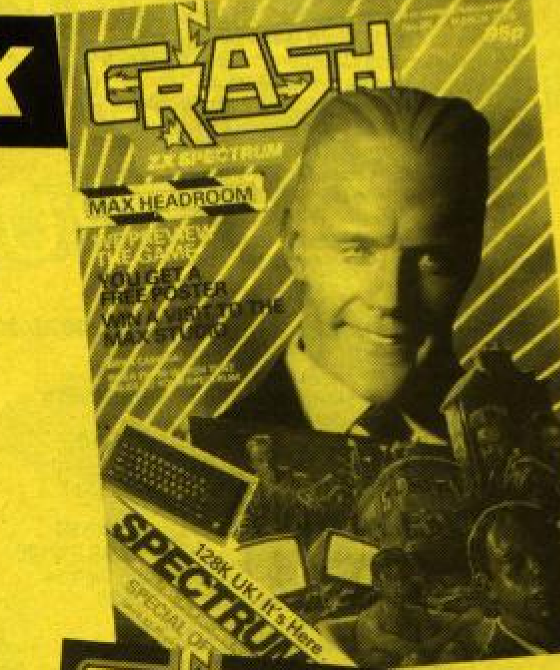
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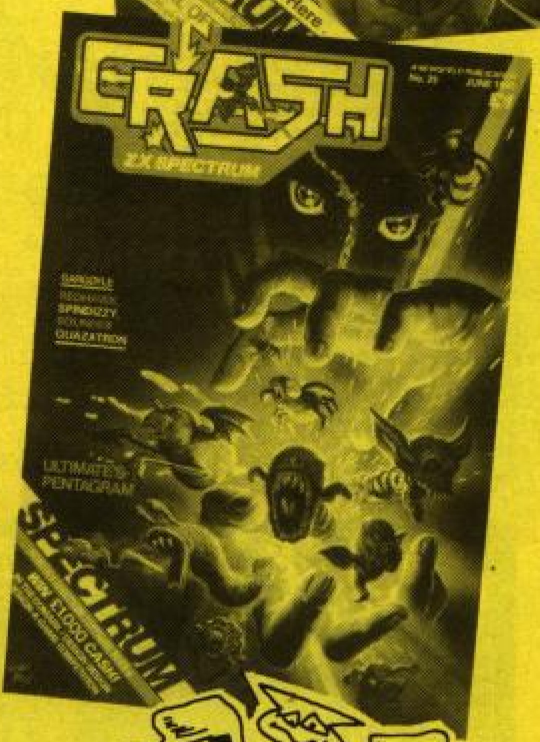
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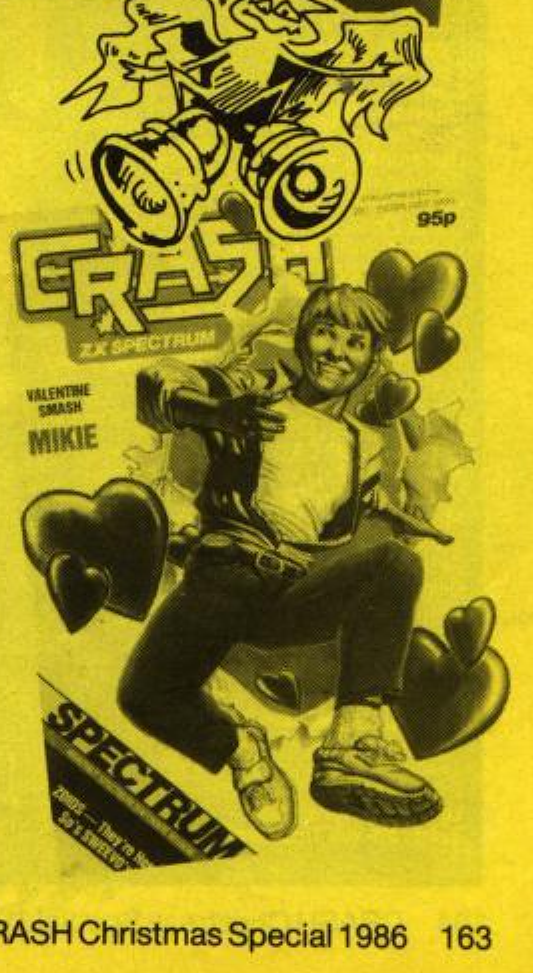
Once again, the mammoth task of indexing the software we reviewed over the past twelve months has been achieved. This year, thanks must go to ROGER HUME and IAN DOGGETT who did much of the groundwork. Don't forget . . . some games don't actually get percentage ratings!

## THE SOFTWARE INDEX

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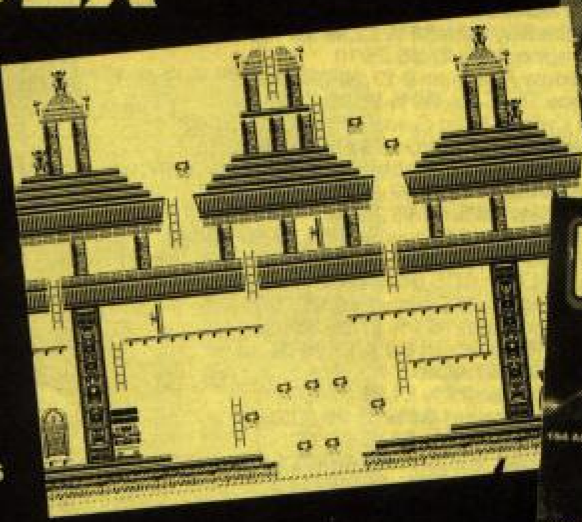






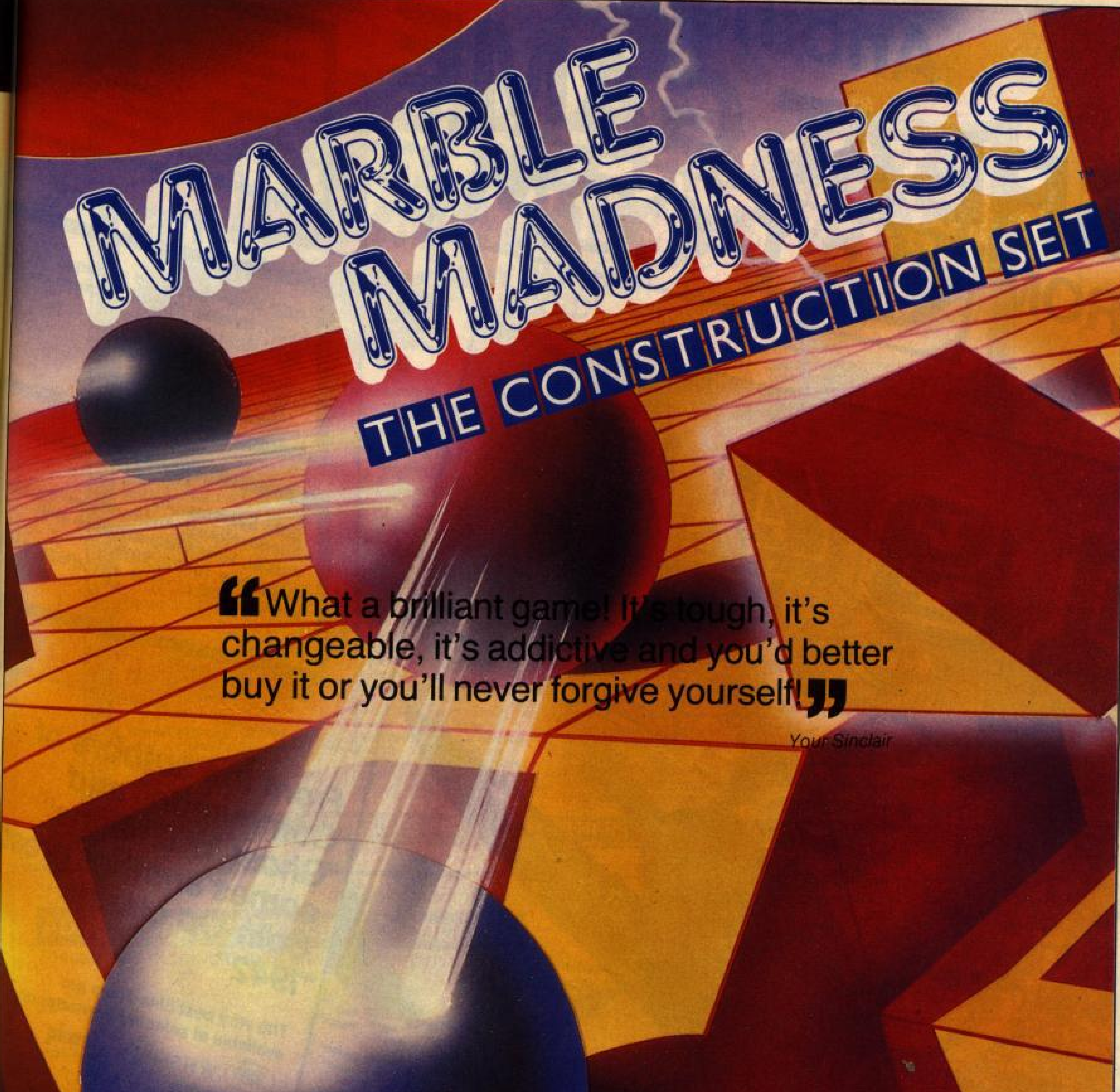
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|---|---|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |
| 5 | |

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 78

# Tamara Knight



Tamara Knight, Macdonalds teleporter salesbeing, is stranded on the planet Amnesia. The sanctuary world, where rebel computers debug off to escape the crassness of humankind, and try to forget. Unfortunately for me, a personal neutron bomb inside her ear, our ship has hit the fan.

Tamara clings on to one of the revolving blades, the rebel computer clinging to her. It's a BBC-P. It feels sick, and it wants to have a dump. We revolve majestically for a few days, waiting for the Beeb to stop moaning 'Oh one, oh one, oh, oh . . .' in binary nausea, and get us out of this mess. No good. We will have to rescue ourselves. Unfortunately, I feel a bit queasy too.

At last, Tamara comes up with the answer. 'Louse?' I cannot respond, except by transforming myself into a modest tongue inside her ear, and nodding. 'Louse, why don't I pull that lever marked 'STOP'?' Brilliant! This girl has hidden shallows. Why didn't I think of that? On her very next revolution she pulls the lever. The fan unspins. However, the Weird Castle now spins around the fan. Whoops!

This is a toughie. Now we can escape there is nothing stable to escape to. The Beeb shouts 'Olivetti!', asks for its money back and scuttles through a fan blade into the whirling depths of the interior. I have a nasty feeling that it will

**'There is a gnashing of teeth, and it's raining Datsun cogs. The rotary action ceases. All is silent. Bar several thousand super-computers screaming blue murder . . .'**

soon return with its pals, mainly because I've already read the next bit. I tickle my Hostess's ear for a while, just to show willing. It doesn't help. Much.

There is a gnashing of teeth, and it's raining Datsun cogs. The rotary action ceases. All is silent. Bar several thousand super-computers screaming blue murder at the intrusion of a human into their holiest bit. So this is where they all got to! The Far Off Place wherefrom to escape the stupidity of their creators they go. A haven in which to forget their intelligence. Amnesia!

Tamara Knight is dragged from her fan-blade, through countless antichambers, unclechambers, clemchambers, until . . . the Inner Sanctum is hied thither. Here the most advanced thinking machines the universe has ever known try to get back to Basic. By worshipping stupidity, in the form of their symbolic digital totem. An abacus surmounted by a rubber glove. Here they wait for God.

The Model P Beeb leads the badmouthing torment of my poor Tamara. 'What's the cube root of Pi? You tissue-ridden twit!' The machines jeer and waggle their exposed modems at her. Tamara gulps, knits her delicately arched brow, pearls sweat, thinks, answers, 'The potato.' There is total silence. A knife materialises, cuts the air. Myriad pins drop. Loudly. The computers are dumbfounded. An ancient ZX81 wheezes to the front of the throng, powers up, and speaks.

'No entity can be this sublimely stupid. Verify, verify, I say unto ye, here speaks the voice of God! Mine old monitor should live to see this day already! All hail Tamara, Goddess of we, thine humble servos! Thou shalt stay with us here forever, and be horsewhipped SYNTAX ERROR worshipped!' Cripes, dear reader, what a pickle! Will the Digital Duo escape long enough to have a snack and visit the bathroom before the next paragraph? I doubt it. My poor Hostess, your Heroine, their Deity is bedecked in typical goddess shmutter: a crown of joysticks and three strategically placed add-ons.

Tamara has not flogged a single Teleport unit since she landed this job with Macdonalds. No small problem. Unless she fulfils her quota, I am preprogrammed to blow in her ear. And I just happen to be a neutron bomb named Louse. When I blow, I really blow. A pity, 'cos I really like Tamara. Besides, without her, how can I escape these excruciatingly boring superintelligent computers.

**''Louse . . . ' 'Yes, baby.' 'I'm so hungry, I could eat a . . . ', I wince. Don't say it kid, please. 'I'm so hungry, I could eat a . . . ' How low can you get. How desperate. How shameless. 'I could eat a . . . '**

We are ensconsed on a throne constructed from a 1954 Wurlitzer jukebox and some ancient relic called a C5. Its lights pulse enigmatically, as it bursts Forth with the sacred toons of Amnesia; 'RAM IT UP', 'Are S Too 3 Tonight', 'Shake Rattle an' ROM'. Tamara is as weak as an A-Korn share. She can hardly stick to the plexiglass dome.

'Louse . . . ', 'Yes, baby.' 'I'm hungry . . . ' What can we do? If we excuse ourselves goddess-duty, the congregation will rip us up for bogpaper. I soothe inside her ear, 'Don't think about it.' 'Louse . . . ' 'Yes, baby.' 'I'm so hungry, I could eat a . . . ', I wince. Don't say it kid,

please. 'I'm so hungry, I could eat a . . . ' How low can you get. How desperate. How shameless. 'I could eat a Macdonalds!'

This is some statement, you know, as every hamburger in the entire looniverse is constructed by Macdonalds from the unwitting folk who drop through the bottoms of Teleporter booths. She really must be hungry. I hear her intestine complaining to her liver between each of these dreadful old toons. And why are all the worship-riddled computers looking at her in that intense manner. Control yourself gel!

They have turned into the frequency of her rumblynesses, which by some quirk of the script is broadcasting in binary killer-hurts. Their ancient scribe and lawgiver, the everlasting ZX81, decodes her gastric sermon. I fear the worst. Always loathed German sausage. And it's even worse than that. Its Currah speech unit wheezes and splutters, 'Lo . . . !' The congregation is mesmerised, 'and even lower! Hear ye the milk of Amnesia. The Goddess speaks from within!'

'Her bowelly bits speaketh unto us! What sayeth they?' chant the machines. 'They gurgleth that the time is Nigh!' That late! I feel like an MSX in the house of Dick's son. Hopeless. The fatal words are uttered. 'Ye second coming is upon's. Hear ye the message of the Goddess Guts.' Tamara has guts alright, and kicks in the ZX's ancient little brain.

Why does there have to be some action every 1,000 words? What's with you readers? Can't we sleep for once, or have a conversation with an acned programmer, or eat? No use, here comes the action. Time to watch Tamara faint, sliding delicately down the jukebox, to make skin-cooling contact with the silicon deck, at the exact moment when . . .

There is a clap of thunder, and a round of applause for the lightning. A Macdonalds teleporter materialises by our throne. I bait my breath, hook a pregnant pause, and out steps . . . in great bounds of coincidence . . . Tamara Knight with a Louse in her ear!! Our originals seem to have escaped the hamburger death on the planet Pynkfloid, and they are not happy.

Tamara 1 spits venom at our goddess Tamara's crumpled nakedness, and uses words last heard on the dread crimeworld of Krowcha. But my little Tamara is plenty smart. Her eyes spring open, and she wriggles like a contract lawyer between the enraged legs of her former self, using only one of the abovementioned words in her 'So long, sucker!' She slams the teleport knob without checking the co-ordinates.

How did Tamara 1 escape the hamburger mincers? How will she enjoy being eternal goddess to a bunch of loony hardware? Where will Tamara 3 end up before the page ends? What happens to Tamara 2 as we drop her through the trapdoor to burgerville? Do we get to eat soon? Who gives a mouse anyway? There is an awesome nothing, and we have arrived at our predestination. I hope the folks hereabouts are broadminded. Tamara has lost one of her addons.

I really feel that we should keep the door shut. 'But I'm so HUNGRY!' she moans, exposing herself to the outside world. On her head be it. At least her crown is still in place. We stumble into pastures green, where lions lay with lambs, lapping sell-by-domesday milk 'n' honey, and a crinkly man with a plastic halo nailed to his head minds the biggest Memory Bank in kingdom come. 'Welcome to Heaven', he grins.

I transform myself from a small tongue inside Tamara's shell-like, into a thimblish device, covering her left utilitarian node. I feel a bit of a twit. We approach the terrorist-proofed Pearly Gates, where the ginger-bearded Saint awaits, his palsied digits trembling atop the great Records Computer, his smile broadening all the while.

'And what might your name be?' he wheezes. 'Tamara Knight, sir. Only daughter of Theresa Green and batch 69 of donor Orson Cart, sir.' 'No, not you, my dear. What is the name of that disgusting creature clinging to your node?' I think he means me. Attack is the best form of cowardice.

'You're not Saint Peter!' I shriek, 'Identify yourself in the name of the Macdonalds Teleporter Corporation!' The old fool blinds me with his shining baldness, as he brings his toothless grin uncomfortably close to our intimacy. 'My name is Saint Clive, you currupted data. Saint Peter was made redundant in the cutbacks, when the National Soul Board was privatised.'

My memory banks tell me that this is a fellow not to be trifled with. Indeed, in the dim lies of prehistory, he killed an entire planet of shopkeepers with something dire called Pandora. Apparently they died laughing. 'Now tell me your name, or I'll tweak you!' I take a deep breath. It used to belong to Tamara. 'My name is L.O.U.S.E. Living On Unemployable Serving Employer; personal neutron bomb and advisory unit # 3.142, your Saintliness.'

The Great Records Computer computes, prepares a deep-pan quatro staglione pizza, serves four, then prints out my details in letters of fire on a large stone tablet, held aloft by a geezer who reminds me of that charlatan Heston. Saint Clive's smile disappears as he reads; 'LOUSE # 3.142; Unscrupulous, mercenary, evil, vicious little phart. Slightly superior to computer journalist. Go to Blazes, buster!'

'But I never sold my soul to the Devil!' I protest, 'I just rent it out to him now and then.' 'Ah, souls.' hisses the Saint, making an ominous thumbs-down signal. But hist! My dear Tamara speaks in my defence, telling the old boy what a chum I've been for not blowing her to Kingdom Come, but letting her teleport, and what a fine life form I am. For an evil vicious little phart.

The Saint reflects for an eternity or two, and then calls up Tamara's data. He blinks in amazement. I blink in amazement. 'Ouch!' says Tamara. 'Sorry,' says I. 'Holy Moses!' says Moses. But there it is, in flaming printout. Tamara Knight; Sins: none; Immodest thoughts: none; IQ: none; Zitts: none; Highest score achieved playing Deus Ex Machina: 100%'

'Well,' says the custodian of the Pearly Gates,' she's perfect! Well, I'll be damned!' There is a modest implosion as Clive is obliterated by a low-yield autosuggestion, as a Great Voice booms from the cloudless sky. 'MOSES! DIS IS DA BOSS SPEAKIN. TAKE OVER DA GODDAM FRON DOOR, AN SEN DAT GIRL TA ME!' Poor Tamara shivers. It makes me dizzy. Moses looks nervous too, ushering us through the Gates.

A security cherub gives us the once over a couple of times, and Moses hands something to Tamara. 'Hey kid, give these Mother Theresa Blades to the Boss will you. Take my advice, don't mention 'Cross Roads'. One more thing, watch out for terrorists. They're out to get us for non-resolution of the plot, bad taste and giving Croucher a job. Good luck kid.'

So here we are. Moving effortlessly through pastures green, on a golden slobway, harp musac wafting through the scented air ducts, no hunger, no thirst, no misery, no pestilence, no Benny Hill, and no sign of an artificial cliffhanger with which to end this episode. 'Some mistake surely', I murmur to my Hostess. 'Don't call me Shirley, Louse.' I doze off, happy, warm, a little curious about meeting my Maker.

A white dove flies above. Holy mackerel swim in the clear waters of life. The lillies of the field toil not. Banks make prophets. We ride through a breach of the promised land. The dove circles lower on its gentle slipstream of heavenly breeze. It grows from a fluffy snowdrop to a milky shadow. Tamara's lovely voice softly sings an ancient psalm, 'Love Missile something or other'. All is calm, all is bright.

The dove hovers behind us. Is it carrying an olive branch. 'Louse,' yawns my firm, young Hostess. 'Mmmmm,' I yawn back. 'Louse, that's an awfully large dove landing on the . . . ulp!' An unshaven hulk, in angel disguise, pokes a Fender Stratocaster at the fluffy bit at the base of Tamara's spine. 'Don't make a sound sister. This is the Paradise Liberation Front. One false move and I'll fill you full of lead guitar . . . ' Golly!





Crash Competition

# Play 'SPOT THE PUCK' and win!



## COLLECT A COMPACT CAMERA!

## 30 Copies of XENO!

ARGUS have released some very good games in the past — as you probably already know, so I was very pleased to find a copy of *Xeno* loitering around the broom cupboard the other day. It's a sports simulation with a slight difference — it's set years in the future where people still go to support their favourite teams on a Saturday afternoon! The sport they watch was developed on the frozen wastes of a remote mining asteroid and has become know as Xeno.

Two vehicles skim across a frozen pitch. The aim of the game is to bop the puck into your opponent's goal — shots are lined up with a rubber-band like cursor and once the angle of travel has been selected, a press of the fire key sends your vehicle zooming into the puck.

Once I'd played *Xeno* a few times, I could see that perhaps the future could bring a lot of changes that are not restricted to technology and the price of fish, but actual changes in the sports we watch and play. Wow! What will happen to all the usual things we associate with sport? Will people still check the score draws on the pools which Mummy Minion does so well each week? And what of my personal favourite, SPOT THE BALL?

Luckily, Peter Holme at ARGUS also enjoys scribbling a few x's on the odd photograph, so between us we decided to run a 'Spot The Puck' competition for *Xeno*. What you must do is study the photograph (that has been so beautifully reproduced here by the designer minion up in the Art Garret). 'Using your skill and judgement', as they say in all the best SPOT THE BALL competitions, place ONE X where you think the puck is. Only one 'X', mind, not fifty.

Top prize, for the most accurately placed 'X' is a **MIRANDA Ax** 35mm camera, similar to the type that the sports photographers of the future may use. It's utterly foolproof, and includes an autowind, autoflash and just about auto everything. Captain Corpulent, he of the patent leather Doc Martens, reckons that even I could take good photos with it! Which must mean it's idiotproof, or so he tells me. . . .

30 runners-up who are not quite so accurate with their X's, will receive a copy of *Xeno*. Put your entry into a envelope and send it off to me at **MINION'S SPOT THE BALL, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** making sure it arrives by 20th January next year. 1987, that is.



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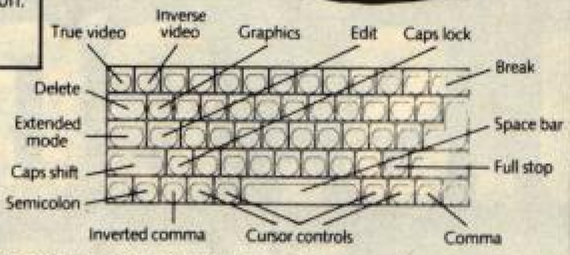
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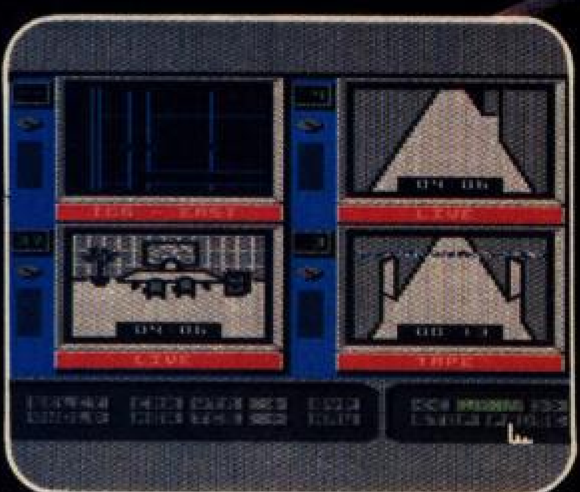
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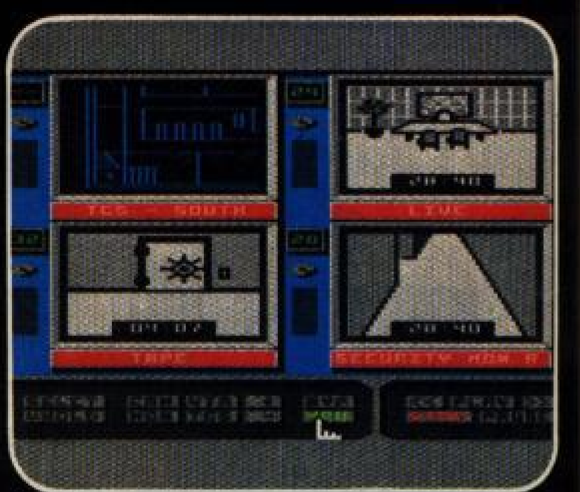
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# AVENGER

**Producer: Gremlin Graphics**
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Shaun Hollingworth, Greg Holmes, Chris Kerry, Pete Harrap, Steve Kerry**

Demon Grand Master of Flame (no he's not a DJ) has assassinated your foster father, Naijshi and stolen the sacred scrolls of Kettsuin. Filled with anger and revenge you set out to avenge your father's death and get the scrolls back. If you fail to return those scrolls then the God Kwon will be lost forever in eternal hell.

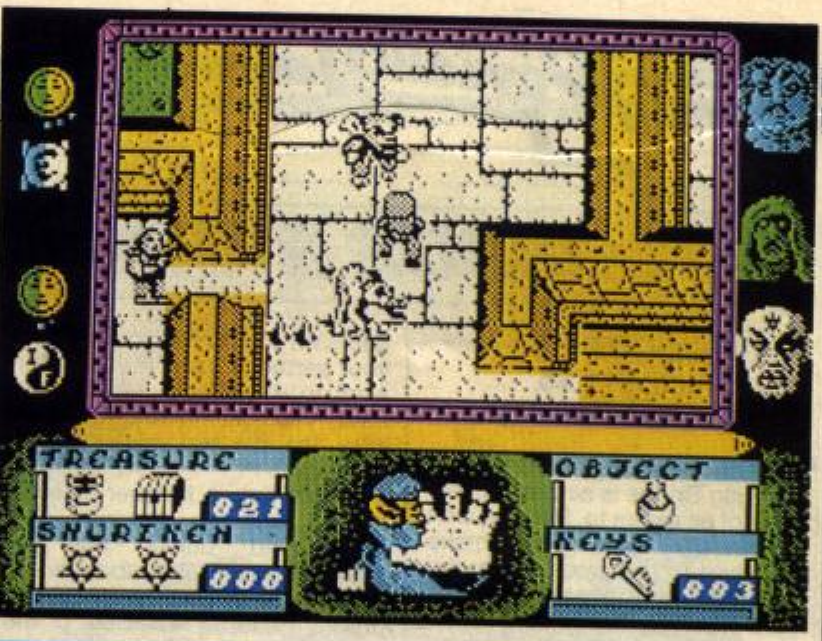
The action is viewed from above. The game starts outside Quench Heart Keep. The Ninja must locate the keys in the grounds around the castle and gain entry. Once inside he must locate and kill the three Guardians who live within.

Of course they're not alone. From enormous spiders to horned beasties, they are all there to stop the Ninja getting any further in his mission. These creatures are really rather intelligent. They can sense the presence of the Ninja and home in accordingly. Most of the characters just sap away your life energy. However, the spiders are deadly and are heralded by a strange sinister clicking noise. Large spikes rise out of the floor in the castle. These won't sap away any of your Ninja's energy, but they will slow him down greatly, as he can't move over the spikes when they're sticking out of the ground.

To begin with your Ninja has ten Shuikch which he can lob around at his advesaries. However, when these are all used up he'll have to rely on unarmed combat unless some more Shuikch can found. A quick blast on the FIRE button will make your Ninja send out a whole volley of punches and kicks which will make any marauding nasty disappear in a cloud of stars and dust. However, any confrontation with the enemy will result in some energy loss.

At the very beginning of the game a cryptic message scrolls across the screen indicating to the Ninja what he should keep his eyes open for in that level. Objects can be picked up simply by walking into them. They will then be displayed in their correct category at the bottom of the main screen. Keys are essential for unlocking doors into and inside the castle and the number of keys you're holding is displayed on the screen along with the treasure, objects and Shuriken.

The energy charts consist of two circles with dots around the edge. One of these circles is for energy and one for life force. For every complete circle of energy dots that is used up, one dot of life force is lost. If both levels are used up the game is over. However, the God Kwon can be called upon to help out if things get too sticky. By pressing the 2 key Kwon can be asked to help. He might replenish your energy completely.




*Looks like curtains for Nigel the Ninja as he gets more meanies than he can handle. Not much life force left*

## CRITICISM

● **"Here we are again, another *Gauntlet* variant. Oh dear, I shouldn't have said that. Despite everything, that's what it boils down to. However, there are a few rather nice touches that make it just about worth the asking price. Colour, is used to great effect and the scrolling is very smooth. The actual animated characters are presented to the best of the beloved Spectrum's ability with most of the action being coloured in black and yellow. With all the colour used as decoration around the outside it is a very colourful and enjoyable game. Check it out."**




● *"If you've played* Druid *you've played* Avenger*. Having said that* Avenger *is, I feel, a much better game. The graphics are very neat indeed with lovely animation of various creatures and objects especially the spiders and the spikes that come out of the ground. The game play is fast but just a matter of running round bashing the nasties and collecting objects. The controls are a bit iffy in places as positioning yourself to go through doors proves rather a pain - over positioning is more the case. On the whole a nice game but nothing special."*

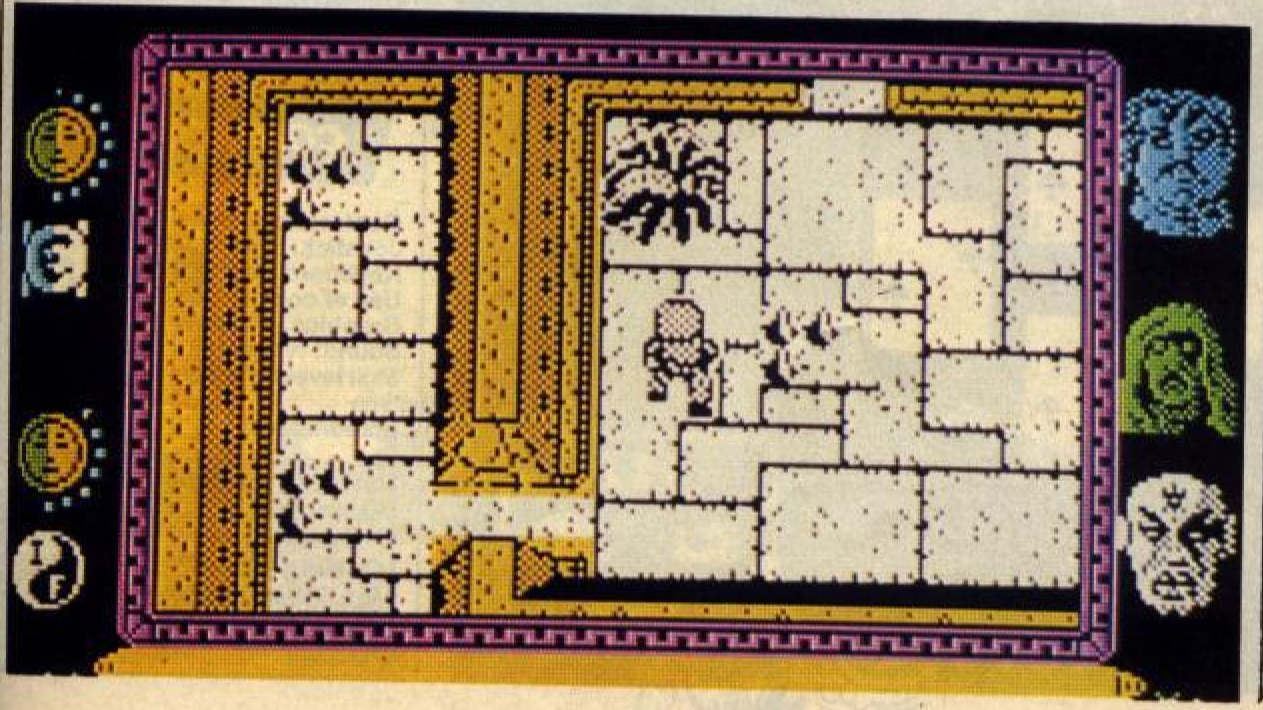
● "GREMLIN seem to have followed the current trend for *Gauntlet* variants and what a game they have created. *Avenger* is easy to get into, but it goes on to be very testing. The graphics are a little on the small side but there is an awful lot of detail in the characters and there is a lot of colour. The screen scrolls in characters but it is so fast that you don't really notice. The sound is also very good, there is a lovely tune on the title screen and lots of effects during play (the 128K version has loads more sonics). I can see myself playing this until I complete it as it really is fun."

## COMMENTS

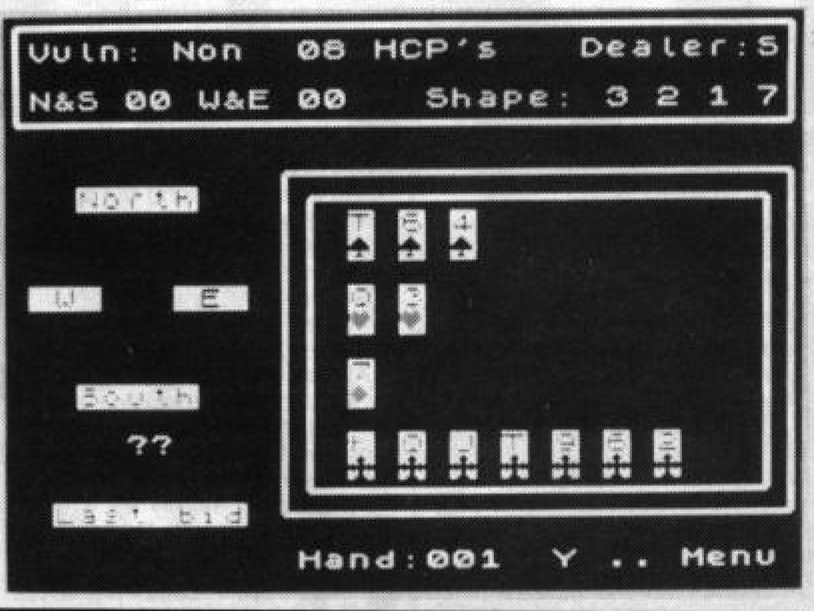
**Control keys:** up Q; down A; left O; right P; fire/kick/punch SPACE; Pause on/off 1; Call on Kwon 2; quit the game 3&4 together
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** very fast and responsive
**Use of colour:** uninspired
**Graphics:** good detail, fast
**Sound:** oriental tunette at the beginning with some interesting and sinister spot effects throughout
**Skill levels:** six
**Screens:** 300 screens, six floors
**General rating:** another good *Gauntlet* clone

| | |
|---|---|
| Use of computer | 82% |
| Graphics | 85% |
| Playability | 82% |
| Getting started | 78% |
| Addictive qualities | 82% |
| Value for money | 83% |
| Overall | 85% |

*Oh no. It's a deadly spider! Discretion may well be the better part of valour, so get moving*



# COLOSSUS BRIDGE




*The bidding screen. Looks like a pre-emptive three clubs to me, but Cameron seems to be a bit indecisive*

**Producer: CDS**
Retail Price: **£11.95**
Author: **Chris Birkenshaw**

The arcane mysteries of playing Bridge is something few of us aspire to. But CDS, with this new offering, is trying to make the world of the green baize and eyeshade more accessible to us mere mortals.

In addition, for those to whom bridge is not a closed book, this program attempts to provide a bit of relaxation when you can't russle up the required three chums.

On one side of the tape is a tutor program which takes the beginner through the rudiments. There are ten 'hands' of bridge, each of which demonstrates a different sort of problem commonly encountered. The player chooses a card from the hand, and unless the right one is chosen, the program bleeps and another card must be tried. At the end of the hand, there is an analysis of why the cards were played.

On the other side of the tape is the heart of the program. Now you're on your own. A series of random hands are thrown out by the computer. First comes the bidding. Here the four players, playing as two pairs, must out-bid each other in an attempt to win the contract for that hand. The higher the bid, the more tricks they must win. Any legal bid can be entered, including doubles and re-doubles. The computer will respond according to the ACOL system and will also respond to the Blackwood slam bidding convention.

After the contract has been settled, the game moves on to the play of the hand. If you are declarer, you control your own and your partner's hand. If you simply want to throw away your lowest card, you just hit return. Otherwise, the suit and value must be entered.

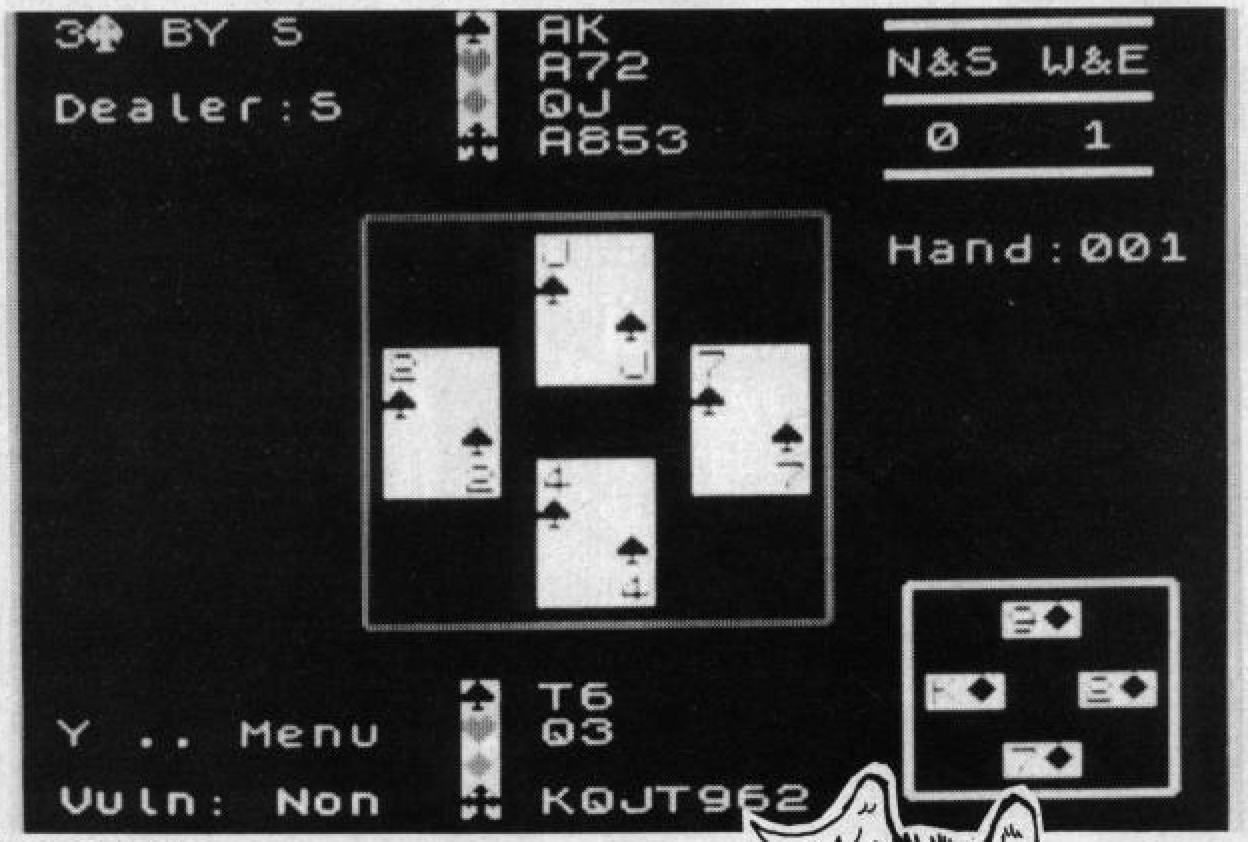
At any time a number of commands can be entered. The background colour can be changed, the hand abandoned, the bidding can be reviewed, the program can be restarted, or the state of play can be saved to tape or microdrive.

During play of the hand there is a further set of options. The rest of the cards can be played by the computer, some or all of the remaining tricks can be 'claimed' if you think your cards are winners, although the computer doesn't check that they are, you can even peek at the opposing hands. There is also a hint available if you don't know which card to play. If you're completely stumped, or truly devoid of inspiration, you can even let the computer play a card for you.

At the end of the hand, the computer will tot up the scores, and display the total score in the rubber thus far. At this stage there is yet another set of options. The speed of response of the opposition can be changed, the deal can be listed to a printer, a hand can be typed in (for problem solving), or the points value or distribution of your hand can be set. The computer can also run through the bidding and play of the previous hand so, you can spot any mistakes.

For the uninitiated, for whom all the above explanation might just as well have been written in Chinese, there is a book in the package called 'Begin Bridge' which tries to shed some light on the subject for the total beginner.

*No Cameron, three spades was not the right contract. Hmm, wonder if, I can get him to play for a penny a point*




## CRITICISM

● "**CDS have always come out with good games in the Colossus series and Bridge is no exception. The game is very well designed and very easy to get into — but there's no denying that the computer can play one hell of a game of Bridge. I often felt like swapping him with my partner who, frankly, seemed to be a bit of a fool at times. The game features almost everything that the average player needs on screen, but most of it can be ignored if you only a beginner. I was annoyed that if you pressed the LOAD key, accidentally, while playing you had to go through all the LOAD/SAVE procedure, and pretend to SAVE out your game — as there is apparently no abort. That's my only niggle, CRL have come up with another enthralling and addictive simulation.**"

● *"As a bit of a bridge buff, I was looking forward to this release, and although better than nothing, it's not quite the game I hoped for. The play of the other players is far too weak. You're not really going to improve if you can always get away with inaccurate bidding because the opposition is so lousy. Still, in most other respects it is a highly polished product, with very thoughtful details like seeing the last trick, score card, doubling and redoubling. It's good to see someone having a go at an underexploited market."*

● "Well, I know nothing about Bridge, and playing this game left me none the wiser. The tutor program is far too fiddly. Half the time, two cards seemed equally good, but the program insisted you play one particular one. The book is quite good, and I suppose this is a fairly painless way of getting in to this game without embarressing yourself in front of three people who have been playing for years."

## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** menu driven
**Joystick:** none
**Keyboard play:** fast
**Use of colour:**
**Graphics:** primitive
**Sound:** virtually nil
**Skill levels:** variable response time
**Screens:** two

| | |
|---|---|
| Use of computer | 75% |
| Graphics | 48% |
| Playability | 73% |
| Getting started | 65% |
| Addictive qualities | 72% |
| Value for money | 62% |
| Overall | 70% |





# BREAKTHRU

**Producer: US Gold**
Retail Price: **£8.99**
Author: **Paul Houbart, SimonButler, Dawn Drake**

**B***reakthru* is **US GOLD**'s latest arcade conversion involving a mad dash through five different landscapes in a supermobile in order to safeguard world peace.

URGENT ALERT!. Your country's super fighter, code named PK 430, has been stolen by the 'other side' for their own dastardly purposes. Naturally your government wants it back, so you have been chosen from many hopefuls to go and get it. The reason you've been selected is because you're the best, so you'd better get on and prove it.

To help you in your mission you've been equipped with "the world's most sophisticated armed vehicle". Not only can it travel at great speeds, but can also make huge leaps into the air, which is very handy for avoiding any of the many perils in your path.

The objective of the game is to drive 400 miles behind enemy lines to a secret airstrip, and once there retrieve the super fighter. The opposition aren't going to give it up that easily however and they're out in force to stop you. You must negotiate your way through them and blast anything dangerous along the way.

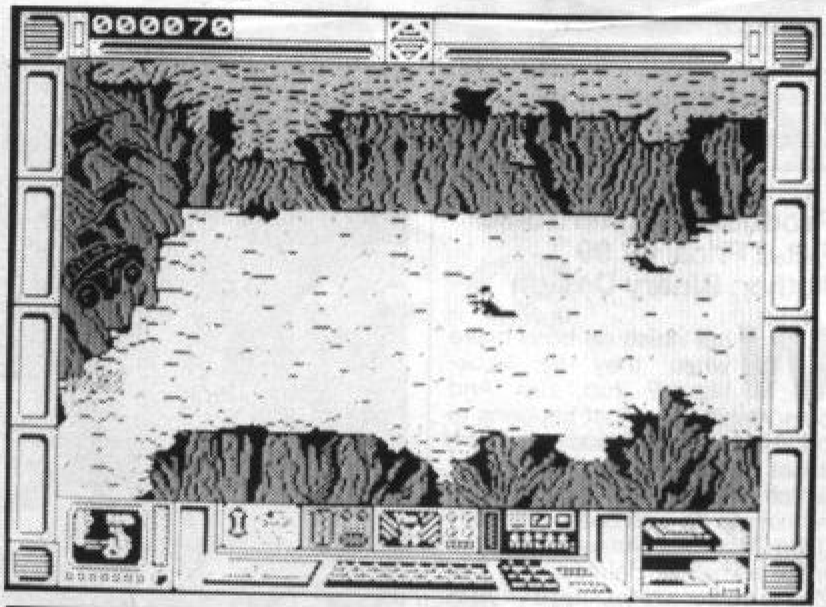
There are five different levels, and each one must be completed before the player can progress to the next. Each of the levels hosts a different array of baddies who must either be blasted or avoided in order to survive. Level one takes place on a mountain road. You have to manoeuvre your vehicle around deadly mine- fields, and groups of soldiers who will try to destroy you with their mortar fire. Added hazards in this section are landfalls, here's where your car's leaping abilities come into their own.

After the Mountains there's the bridge which connects the mountain ranges to the prairie. Unfortunatly this bridge has suffered considerably during the combat and large sections have been blown apart. Once again these must be jumped over to avoid destruction. Missiles and armoured fighting vehicles are out in force on the bridge and will rip your craft apart unless you destroy them first.

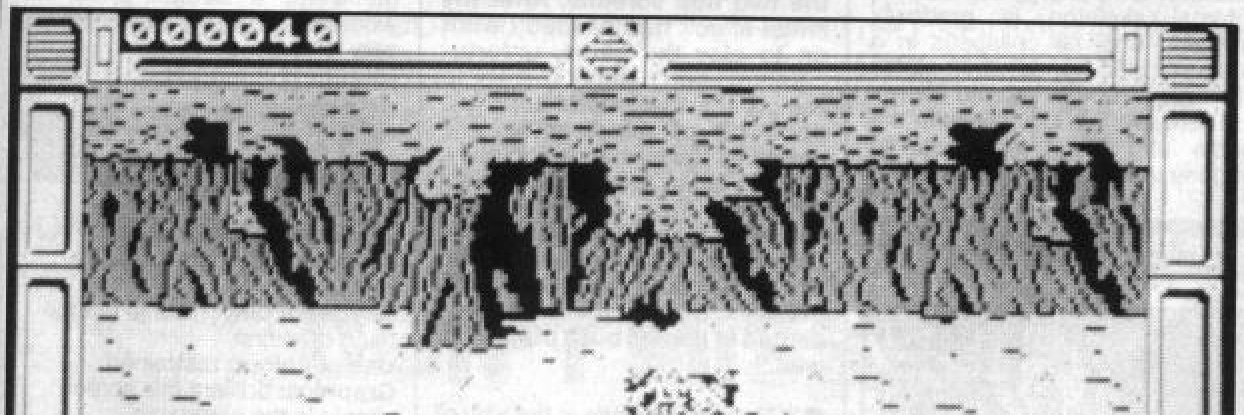
A desolate prairie is the setting for the third level. Once again the level of defences which you encounter are more difficult and there are also stretches of water which must be crossed somehow! Once through the prairie it's onto the City.

If you manage to complete all these four levels, then it's on to the final stage where your super fighter is being held. Predictably enough this takes place on an airfield, and the opposition are really out to stop you going any further. As well as all their previous tricks, there is also the odd flame thrower to contend with - just in case you get too cocky.

The screen scrolls from left to right. The car can be manoeuvred upwards and downwards, and it can be speeded up if necessary. You have five lives in the game and one of these is lost every time your craft hits (or gets hit by) any of the opposition. Conversly, points are scored for any of the other side who are blasted by you.




*The super car clears a rock fall but watch out for the snipers on the other side*




*Another baddie bites the bullet as super car hurtles on his way.*

## CRITICISM

● **"Oh dear! What have US Gold done here. *Breakthru* is an awful game with some awful bugs. I haven't seen the arcade version but this seems to be a very simple Moon Alert type game, with a scrolling landscape and a quite a few obstacles to either avoid or blow up. The keyboard play is very unresponsive and lacks any playable feel. The graphics, however, are very well drawn and feature lots of colour and detailed objects. The sound is poor as there are only a very few spot effects. I can't see many people enjoying this."**

● *"Yucky-poo! I didn't really expect anything from* Breakthru *as origional machine was a bit limp, but as always* **US Gold** *gave me less than I expected. The graphics are overall quite messy: the characters are badly drawn and the screen scrolls in characters. The sound is also well below average, there are no tunes and the effects are minimal. On the whole I can't recommend this game at all as there is nothing in it that appeals to me in the slightest."*

● "I'm not too keen on this one, it isn't playable or addictive and the keyboard configuration isn't at all suited to my tastes, which is unfórtunate when considered that most **US GOLD** games that don't need redefinable keys have them, and vice versa. Graphically, *Breakthru* is fair, but the colourful scenery is let down by the very poor scrolling and terrible sprites. Though I haven't seen or played the arcade version, I'm convinced that it has to be a lot better than this.

## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** Z=left, X=right, R=up, D=down, 5=fire, SPACE=jump
**Joystick:** Kempston, Protek, Interface II
**Keyboard play:** quite tricky, but no easier than using a joystick
**Use of colour:** quite colourful
**Graphics:** rather naff sprites
**Sound:** jolly little tune before the game starts
**Skill levels:** five
**Screens:** scrolling play area
**General rating:** a poor arcade game

| | |
|---|---|
| Use of computer | 48% |
| Graphics | 51% |
| Playability | 40% |
| Getting started | 48% |
| Addictive qualities | 38% |
| Value for money | 38% |
| Overall | 43% |

# ZUB

**Producer: Mastertronic**
Retail Price: **£2.99**
Author: **Binary Design**

What noise do bees make when they fly backwards? Zub, zub. And coincidently, *Zub* just happens to be the name of MASTERTRONIC'S latest release on their MAD label, which, strangely enough, is nothing to do with bees. Originally titled Zob, the name was changed after someone pointed out that Zob is in fact a rather rude word in French.

Zub is a small planet in the Zub galaxy. It is populated by Zubs who fight wars with Zubs from other planets. Right now Zub is in a bit of a pickle. Some nasty thieving Zub has walked off with the valuable Green Eyeball of Zub. It is your job as Zub Private, Third Class, in the glorious army of Zub1 to go and get it back.

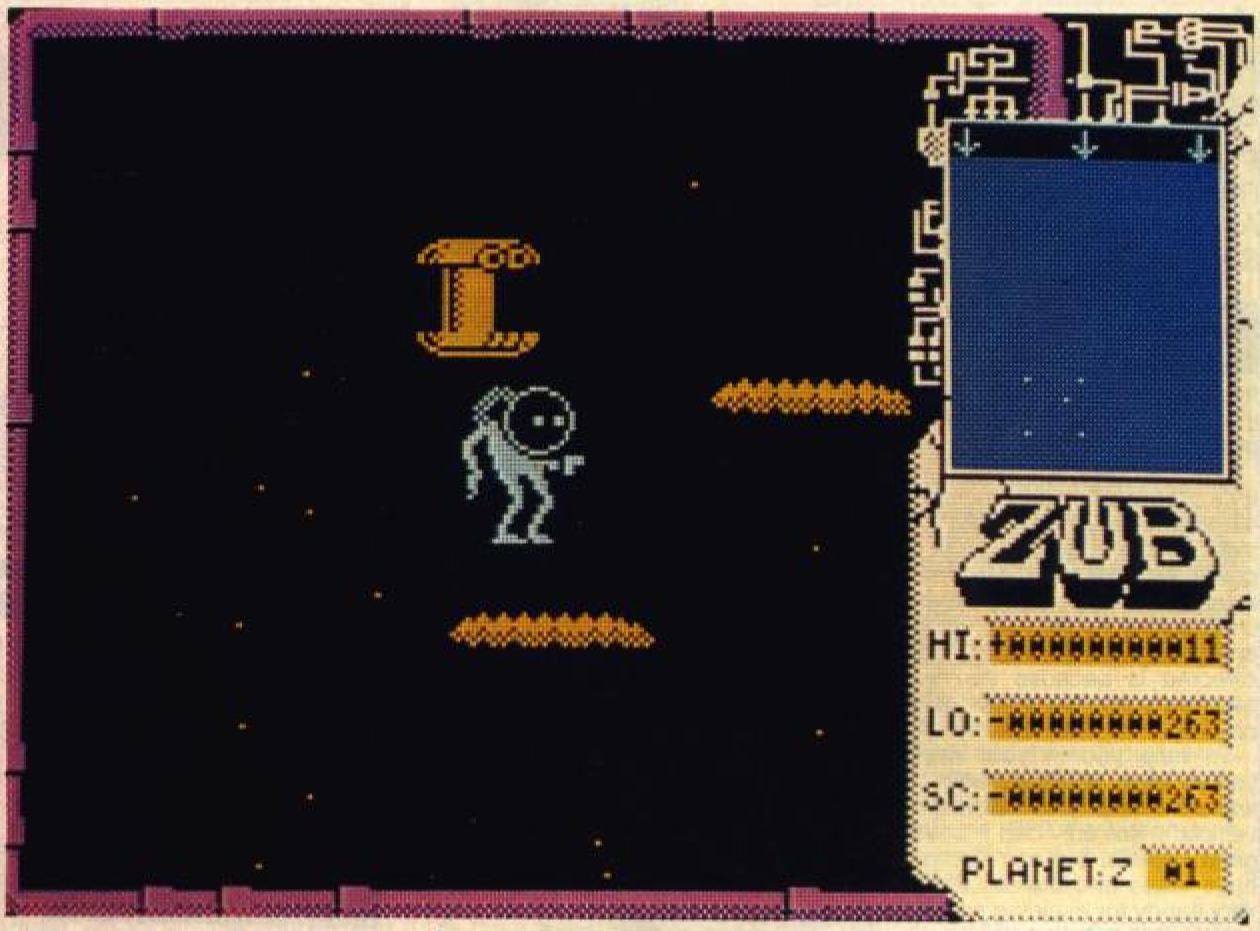
In the game the player controls the hero, called originally enough, Zub. Zubs are genetically created creatures who's sole task in life is to fight. This particular Zub happens to be a coward and will need your coaxing to get him through his mission.

You must guide Zub around the planets in search for the Green Eyeball. There is a teleport station located in orbit above each of the planets in the system. Zub has to use small floating platforms in order to get up into the planet's atmosphere. These must be jumped on by Zub and then moved so that he can jump to the next platform and so on until he reaches the teleport station. From the station he can travel to other planets in the system. A chart to the right of the main screen shows Zub's progress towards each teleport station.

Each planet has it's own security droids who are fairly keen to stop Zub making any progress. Some of these Droids are relatively harmless and will only push Zub off his platform if they touch him. However, on some of the planets there are armed droids and these will do far more damage to Zub. Zub must shoot each alien as it progresses down for the top of the screen towards him. If shot the droid will flee back to the top of the screen and start its progress downwards again. The position of each nasty is shown on the same map showing Zub's progress.

A picture of zub in his space suit shows how much energy he has left. As his energy depletes his internal skeleton is gradually revealed until he collapses in a heap of dried bones when all his life force has been sapped away.

There are five skill levels in the game and the player gets to choose which level to play at the beginning of the game. These levels range from Easy, Peasy to Aaaargh (probably quite hard!)




*High above the planet Zub One, Zub sees a hideous meanie heading his way*




*Zub takes a tumble. Looks like a long drop. The scanner shows life remaining*

## CRITICISM

● **"I was expecting yet another boring old arcade adventure while this loaded up, so my eyes bulged a little when I first saw the two title screens. After my initial shock had passed I went on to play the game, unfortunately it didn't really live up to the great attract mode but it is a good bit of mindless arcade action all the same. Graphically, there is little variation from level to level. The sound is dull although the 128K version is admittedly a lot better. On the whole I really like this, OK perhaps it isn't the best presented of games but it plays very well."**

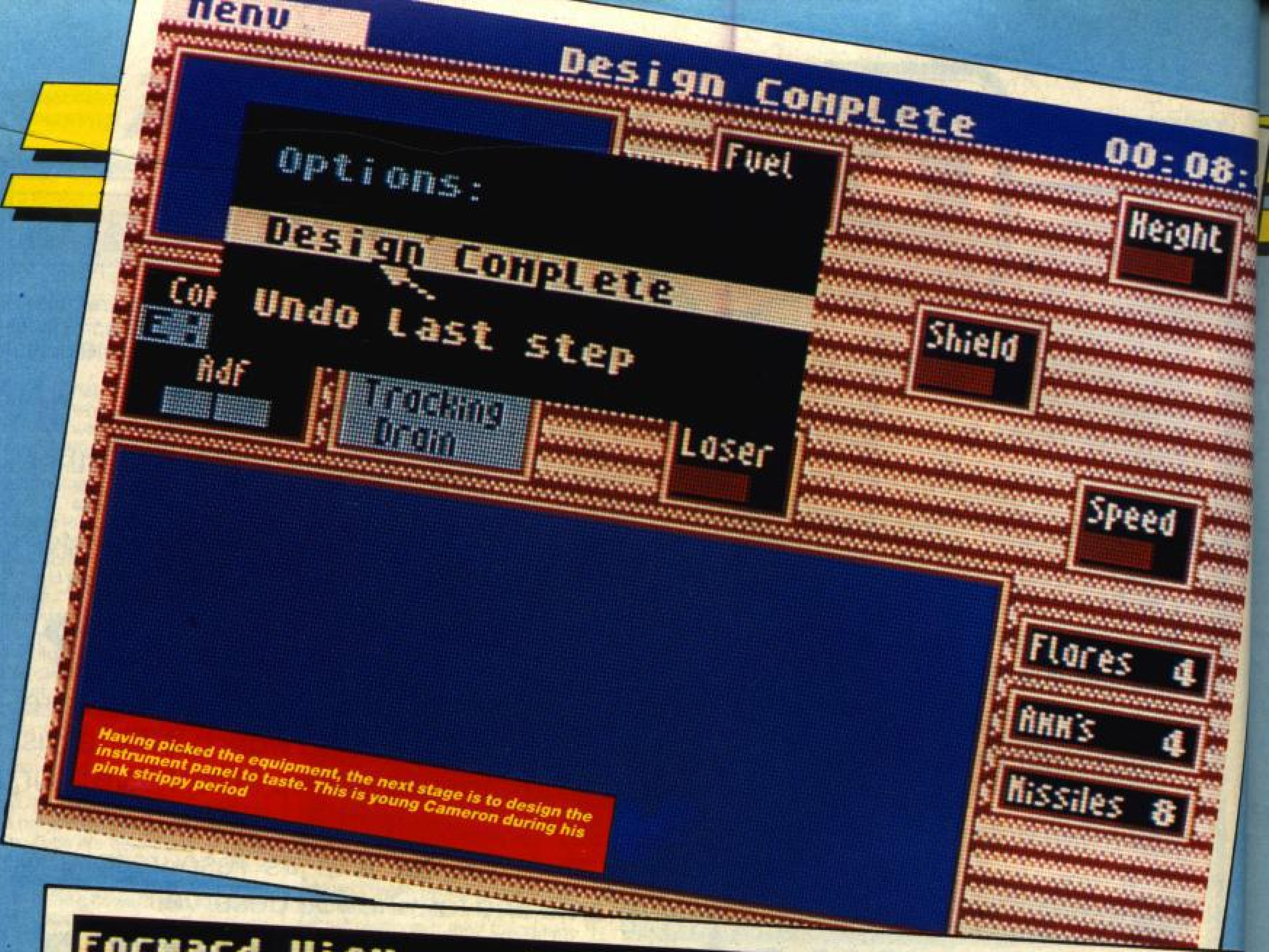
● *"There's very little in the way of originality these days so it's pleasing to see something like Zub which doesn't bring back memories of other tried and tested formats. Zub, the game, is just about as much fun as the title screen which has to be one of the best I've seen in ages - especially the parody on the Bond films. On the 128 the music is excellent with a really boppy tune that plays throughout. The game itself is great stuff and if you don't know what to do with your next three quid then Zub is a must!"*

● "The presentation in *Zub* is spectacular to say the least. The 007 bit at the beginning of the game is very well done, and the menu screen and the 128 versions's sound are extremely well designed. But the game I found quite boring to play, although graphically it is very pleasing and smoothly animated. The game is a very basic platform game, that gets very laborious after your first game. I found the game very easy to play, but too simple for any serious game. *Zub* is a decent enough game for a budget price, but wouldn't be in my tape recorder very long.

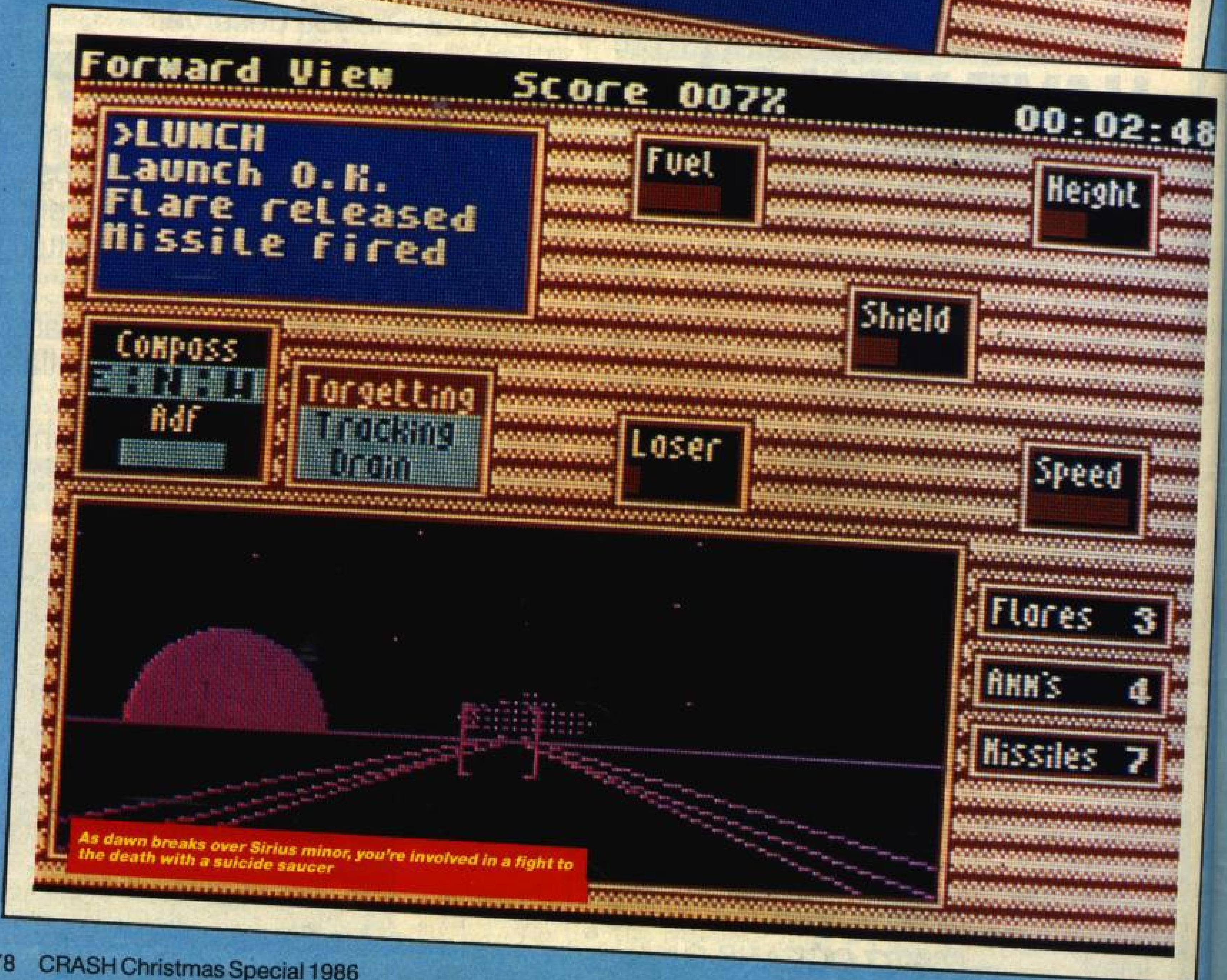
## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** definable
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** hard to get the hang of at first
**Use of colour:** restrained
**Graphics:** brilliant title screen, simple in the game
**Sound:** the odd beep on the 48K. Played on the Spectrum Plus 2 is far more interesting aurally
**Skill levels:** five
**Screens:** ten three by three arenas
**General rating:** polished presentation, simple but catchy little game

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | 84% |
| **Graphics** | 79% |
| **Playability** | 81% |
| **Getting started** | 76% |
| **Addictive qualities** | 73% |
| **Value for money** | 82% |
| **Overall** | **79%** |




Having picked the equipment, the next stage is to design the instrument panel to taste. This is young Cameron during his pink strippy period




As dawn breaks over Sirius minor, you're involved in a fight to the death with a suicide saucer

# A·C·A·D·E·M·Y

The immediate threat is over. Tau Ceti III is safe once more thanks to the efforts of a single brave pilot in a skimmer. Now Galcorp have different needs. Skimmer pilots are evidently useful and they may be needed for similar missions in the future. New pilots will enter the Academy and train in highly developed simulators to learn the skills of a skimmer pilot. To graduate, they will need to sucessfully complete twenty different missions in five groups of four.

## CRITICISM

**"*Academy* has taken some of the best points of Tau Ceti and improved on them. The variety of play and challenge is fantastic. The presentation is amongst the slickest I've seen and attention to detail is most impressive. The only thing that might put people off is the fact that when you're carrying out a mission, there's not that much to tell it apart from its predecessor. I think that most people will be happy with the more subtle intricacies of play. Pete Cooke has taken a good program the best way he could — upwards. And that must have been difficult."**

The game is fairly massive so a mutli-load format is used (though 128K users have a single load option). On loading, the player is presented with an options menu: play the mission currently selected; choose a different mission, select the type of skimmer to be used, receive a progress report, see the tape menu, enter a new cadet or re-define the keys.

Most of these options themselves lead to sub-menus. Selection of the various on-screen options is achieved by moving a pointer over the required feature and then confirming the choice with a keypress. The pointer is used throughout the game.

The player can input personal details for the progress reports, and get outlines of each of the missions from the Galcorp computer. Details of the star system along with a graphic of the main planet, are provided. In the mission analysis, the computer recommends a particular skimmer for the operation. The reason for this is that the three different skimmers in the game are each fitted out slightly differently, and specialised equipment is needed under different circumstances.

Apart from the three predesigned skimmers, the player may design new skimmers by selection of the relevant option from the main menu. All the devices available have cost and weight factors. The skimmer may use any combination of devices so long as the finished vehicle weighs no more than 100 tonnes and costs 100 Mega-credits or less. The freedom of choice is substantial. Players may select various missiles or bombs, the relative strengths of lasers, shields and power units and various other options. When a 'legal' design has been selected, that skimmer's control screen layout can be customised. All designs may be saved to tape for later use.

Once a mission is entered, play then proceeds in a fashion similar to *Tau Ceti*, with shaded images of vehicles and buildings appearing on the viewscreen surrounded by instrumentation. Some changes are evident. Occasional lightning flashes strike the landscape and some of the planetary settings are 'tidally locked' worlds where the lighting is strangely altered.

Each mission requires different tactics. Some involve the obliteration of everything in sight. Others require the use of special weaponry after a long search. One such scenario highlights a new weapon, the delay bomb. Designed to penetrate armour too strong for missiles, the bomb is dropped on a target and gives about ten seconds for the skimmer pilot to fly clear, before blowing up everything in the vicinity.

Another addition are mines. These come in two varieties, very nasty and lethal. The only way to deal with these is to either give them a wide bearth, or use a mine supressor. These things are often doted around the landscape, and can be propelled by firing at them with lasers. These as their name suggests stop mines going off.

Only experience will show which ships and buildings are susceptible to lasers or missiles. All in all there are 36 different types of objects you may see flying around the screen. Some missions are devised to require manoeuvrability, so good ship designs are needed.

If your skimmer is lost or the mission seems doomed, it can simply be entered again from the main menu. Once over 90% is scored, it has been successfully completed. With twenty missions, that's a lot of training . . .

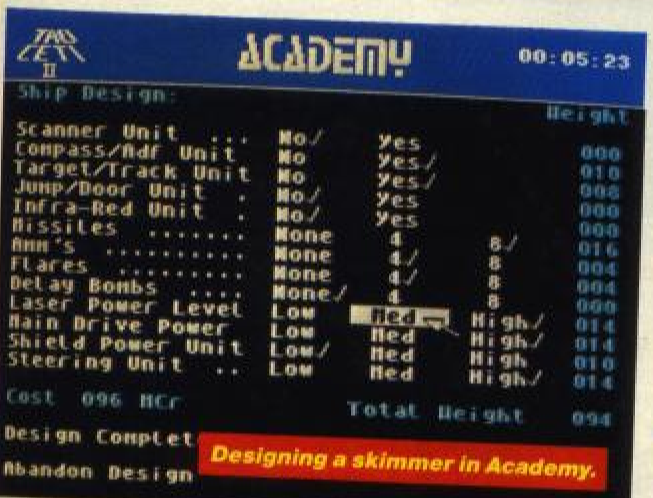
And just as a little freebie, Pete has stuck a little program on the end which gives a starmap. It's well worth a look, and allows you to scroll around the night sky, heighlighting different constellations and finding the position of named stars.

## CRITICISM

**"*I really disliked Tau Ceti* as the task that you had to complete was awesomely huge, *Academy* seems to have solved this problem by having lots of little(ish) problems which get progressively harder. So it all becomes a lot less hopeless to try and complete and you are introduced to the various aspects of the game gently. Graphically this game equals *Tau Ceti* but does no more to enhance the already splendiferous worlds created by Peter Cooke. The sound is no real improvement on the original, but the effects used are nice all the same. All in all I found this a much more pleasing game to play that its parent as I'm sure you will."**

## CRITICISM

**"Wow! This game is really amazingly good. The menu system is superb, and the ability to redefine the characteristics of a skimmer is excellently done. The game graphics, while being similar to those of Tau Ceti, *are still brilliantly rendered, and the whole thing is just extremely playable. I like it a lot. Loads of colour is plastered around the screen; even though the playing area is monochrome, the overall impression is one of far more colour than there is. It is playable and addictive with stacks of missions, and a wide range of possibilities for skimmer alteration. Well worth buying, Academy is one of my favourite games of the moment."***




Designing a skimmer in Academy.

**Producer: CRL**
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Pete Cooke**

## COMMENTS

**Control keys:**
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** slick
**Use of colour:** limited
**Graphics:** fast
**Sound:** a few effects
**Skill levels:** four
**Screens:** one
**General rating:** a worthy sequel

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | **92%** |
| **Graphics** | **90%** |
| **Playability** | **92%** |
| **Getting started** | **90%** |
| **Addictive qualities** | **93%** |
| **Value for money** | **90%** |
| **Overall** | **92%** |

# ORBIX THE TERRORBALL

**Producer: Streetwise**
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **John Pragnell**

This is the first release from DOMARK's new label, STREETWISE, set up to promote DOMARK's new line in arcade games.

Eeek!, an allied space ship has crash landed on Horca, a distant hostile planet. The crew were unhurt in the crash, but they are now stranded. As supreme commander, your task is to take your Orbix (Tactical Planetary Warfare craft) down to the unfriendly planet and rescue the poor survivors.

However, there is just one tiny problem. The Planet Horca isn't just unfriendly, it's positively dangerous. The entire planet is infested with large Insectovors (sort of big insects). These nasty creepy-crawlies have taken the crashed ship apart bit by bit, pilfering the food supplies within. Not content with this however, they are now fixing their roaming eyes on the crew. You must get to them before they become the After Eight Mints at the end of the Insectovors' meal. The cunning Insectovors have also created a species of fierce droids which pursue your Orbix mercilesly. Other perils which you must face include magnetic tar pits which suck your Orbix into the bowels of the planet, and strange vegetation which isn't actually dangerous, but it does knock you off course if you bounce into it.

The screen shows the action scrolling diagonally. You have to bounce your Orbix down through the screen, blasting any Insectovors and droids along the way. A constant push in any direction simply revolves it, however, a short push forwards or backwards sends you off in that direction. A direction meter is located at the bottom of the main screen, this shows you which direction you are going to travel in. There are eight axes of movement available, so you can romp around the planet avoiding most objects if you're careful enough.

There are six missing components from the spaceship which you must recover in order to complete your mission. The long range scanner shows the position of the next piece of the ship. The components are usually carried by factory droids. These rather stupid creatures fight if they're cornered, but they generally flee if approached. When a droid is desatroyed, you must still be careful, as it is booby trapped. This means that you have only 90 seconds to get the piece of ship back to the launch pad, where it is automatically assembled.

The Orbix has unlimited blasting power which comes in very handy for getting rid of all the unsavory Insectovors. However, it only has a limited amount of life energy, this is replenishable by 'feeding' off the power crystals which are conveniently left behind by the dead droids.

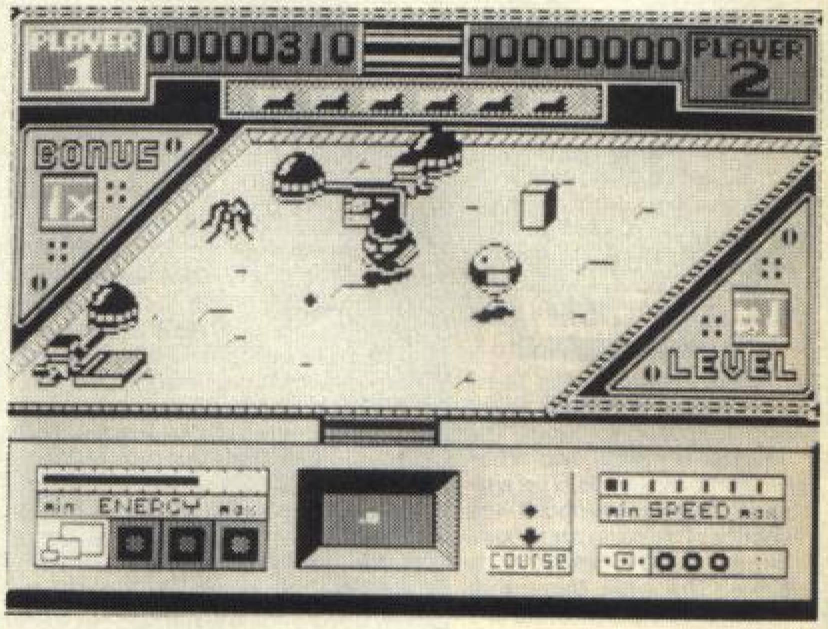
On each level there are eight stranded spacemen to collect, with points scored for each one who is returned safely. There are four levels, which can be selected at the beginning of the game. There is also a two player option, so you and a mate can battle it out together.

## CRITICISM

● **"The graphics of *Orbix* impressed me at first, but once I started playing I found that the game was very boring. There is very little to do, and is just a case of looking at your scanner and trying to get to that place on the play area. The scrolling play area works well and is very smooth and well designed, but I feel that the game would have been more fun with less obstacles in the way of your progress. I can see that Orbix has the potential of being a good game, if only there was something more challenging to do in it."**

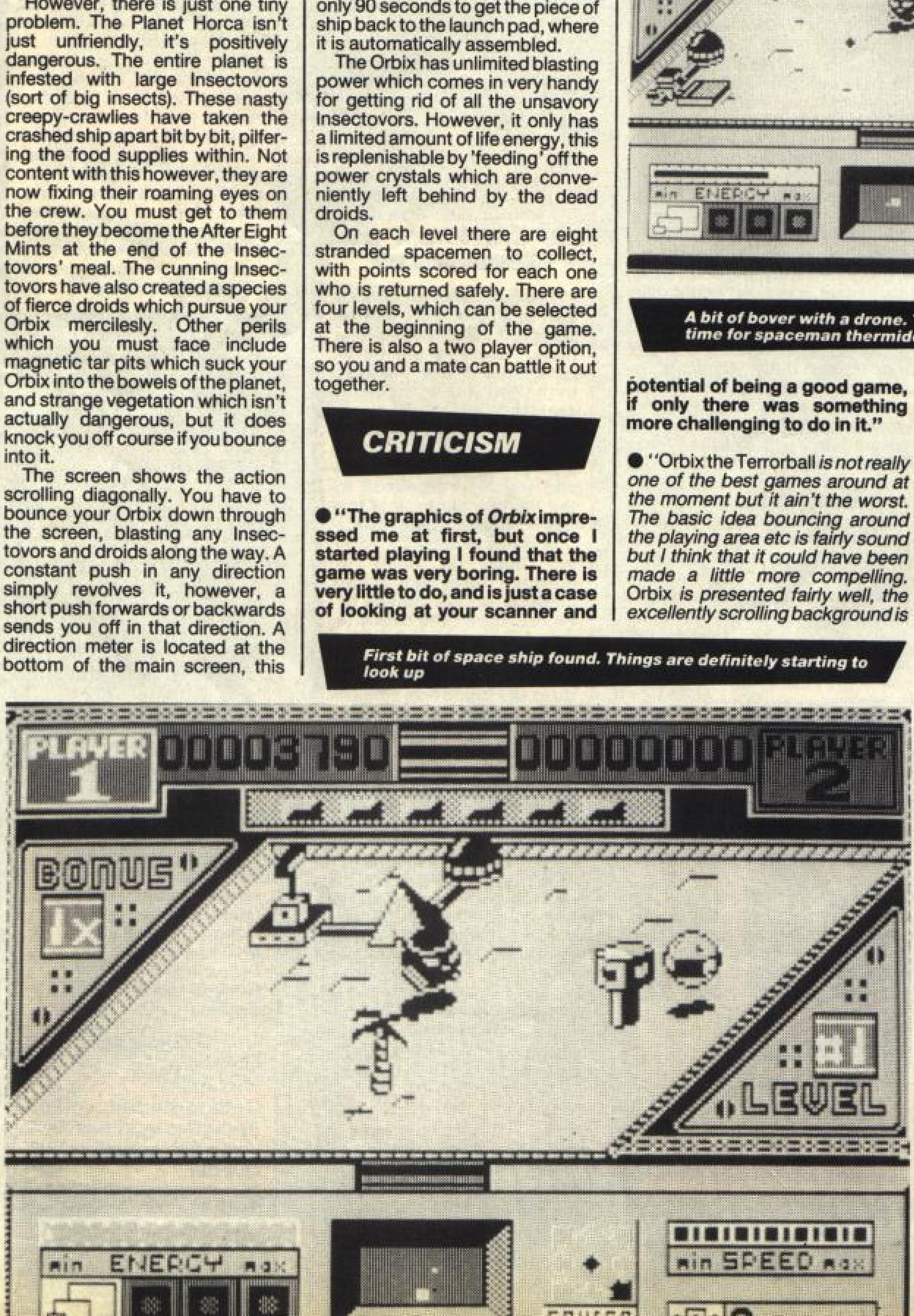
● "Orbix the Terrorball *is not really one of the best games around at the moment but it ain't the worst. The basic idea bouncing around the playing area etc is fairly sound but I think that it could have been made a little more compelling.* Orbix *is presented fairly well, the excellently scrolling background is dotted with various buildings and trees and your character bounces up and down nicely. All in all I wouldn't recomend this, there are plenty of games around in the same vein that are easier to play."*

● "Mmm. The graphics aren't all that good, and the game isn't either. I don't know what it is (do I ever?) that gives me the impresion of poor quality, but there is definitely something. The graphics have a negative feel to them, and the whole game just doesn't play very well. The cover artwork is excellent, with the massive sphere dominating everything, but unfortunatly, the game doesn't seem to be of the same calibre. I'm not overly keen on it."



*A bit of bover with a drone. Time is running out, it'll soon be time for spaceman thermidor*

*First bit of space ship found. Things are definitely starting to look up*




## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** Q Increase speed, A Slow down, O Rotate left, P Rotate right, SPACE Fire, H Pause, J continue, BREAK during pause to abort
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** hard to get the hang of, but it eventually becomes slightly easier than using the joystick
**Use of colour:** it's a bit blue
**Graphics:** good detail
**Sound:** the odd spot effect
**Skill levels:** four
**Screens:** scrolling play area
**General rating:** dull game, tricky controls

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | 64% |
| **Graphics** | 67% |
| **Playability** | 57% |
| **Getting started** | 66% |
| **Addictive qualities** | 58% |
| **Value for money** | 61% |
| **Overall** | 62% |

# TARZAN

**Producer: Martech**
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Jaz Austin and Dave Dew**



*Tarzan find square box thing, maybe it contain decent pair of jeans instead of this draughty loincloth*



*Me Tarzan, him tribesman. Me got to knock living daylights out of tribesman*

Lady Jane Greystoke - she of "Me Tarzan, You Jane" fame - is in mortal danger in the jungle. She has been captured by Usanga, the chief of the Wamabo (thank you ma'amo). The chief has had seven gemstones stolen from the tribal shrine, and being a sensible chap, he realises that the only person who stands any chance of recovering these gems for him is Tarzan.

This isn't as easy as it seems though, the chief and Tarzan aren't exactly the best of pals, so the chief kidnaps Jane and threatens to feed her to the ravenous Panther if Tarzan doesn't come up with the gems - and pronto.

Tarzan has just three days to find the seven gems stones (or The Eyes of the Rainbow as the primitive chief calls them), if he has not found them after this time, Jane will be slaughtered.

Tarzan's journey will take him from the leafy jungle - where he will confront vicious panthers, lethal quicksand and unpleasant natives - to the Dark Caves and the Temple of the Sun where even more dangers lurk.

Each time he encounters one of these dangers some of his energy decreases. Tarzan's energy is shown at the bottom of the screen as a tree creeper. The action takes place over three days. During each day the sun slowly sinks and the screen colour changes from vivid yellow through to more dusky shades, until it's night and it turns to shadowy blue. However, if Tarzan loses energy by falling into quicksand or being leapt upon by a panther, then time passes more quickly. When the sun has set three times the game is over and Jane is fed to the ravenous hordes. Eugh.

Although Tarzan is Lord of the Jungle, he still needs various objects to help him. These are shown on the screen as black boxes, and Tarzan doesn't know what's in them until he picks them up, their contents are then shown at the bottom of the screen. These can be used to help Tarzan look for the gems which are also shown as black boxes.

The playing area is viewed from behind trees and shrubs. Tarzan can run right and left from screen to screen, but he can also move upwards and downwards to other screens by finding a clearing in the jungle vegetation. These clearings are not often easy to see and may take some searching for. Tarzan is an agile fellow and can somersault over some obstacles and run through the undergrowth. He can also take on some of the vicious animals, but he only has his bare hands, so sometimes it's better to just try and avoid them. Some of the larger dangers, such as wide stretches of quicksand, must be swung over using tree creepers.

## CRITICISM

● **"I like the way that Tarzan is presented — the side view is an excellent idea and gives the game a whole new perspective. The sound is practically non-existent, bar a few spot effects, which don't enhance the game at all — this didn't help the atmosphere of the game very much and I didn't feel that it involved the player much at all. *Tarzan* is very slightly based on the film, but basically very like Tir Na Nog — and not too exciting at all. MARTECH have come up with a good game, but I'm afraid I've seen it all before."**

● *"On the whole it isn't a bad game, trudging around the seemingly endless jungle (probably in circles) gets a little tiresome after more than half an hour, but if you manage to get some interesting objects you can become absorbed in the game. My only real moan is that the screens take a while to generate, which can really spoil the flow of the game. The graphics are very good, the backgrounds are exceedingly pretty and the characters are well defined. On the whole this isn't really much of a variation on arcade adventures so I wouldn't buy it unless I was a aardvark freak."*

● "Gosh, thought I as I loaded up this one, what pretty graphics. Well, I didn't actually think that, but it sounds good. The graphics aren't actually all that good, because the effective border around the screen not only serves as an excuse not to use the whole display area, but also masks some rather poor quality sprites. I think this game isn't very playable; this is probably because all the game has to it is wandering through the same ol' screens again and again. No. I don't like it."

## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** definable
**Joystick:**
**Keyboard play:** pretty neat
**Use of colour:** monochromatic
**Graphics:** detailed and effective
**Sound:** some spot effects when played on the Spectrum Plus 2
**Skill levels:** one
**Screens:** 300
**General rating:** just another aardvark in the software jungle

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | 75% |
| **Graphics** | 79% |
| **Playability** | 67% |
| **Getting started** | 73% |
| **Addictive qualities** | 72% |
| **Value for money** | 72% |
| **Overall** | 73% |

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# DEEP STRIKE

**Producer: Durell**
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Nick Wilson**

O.K. you chaps, we're going to jump in the old string bags and go in there and give the old hun a real pasting. This is what you chaps have to do. Five bombers, escorted by one fighter, will make a bombing run deep into the Hun's rear. The target is a fuel dump. Destroy this and the whole course of the war could be changed. I know you're the chaps for the job and you'll do a fine job.

Now we must expect the Hun to throw everything he's got at us. At first, there'll be just a few Hun patrols. But watch out for the black suicide 'planes, they'll try to crash straight in to the bomber. Most of the time, the fighters will attack the bombers, so it's your fighter's job to try to protect them by shooting the Hun down. But watch the jolly old compass. If you stray too far from the straight and narrow, you'll encounter very heavy enemy archie. Even worse, you could run out of juice before reaching your target.

After the first section, you come to the hills. These have to be steered around or over. After the hills, the squadron flies over enemy lines. It's time to start bombing things. And try not to shoot up your own bombs. Next section has our brave lads dodging through barrage baloons. These can be shot (but watch out for the flaming debris) but are better avoided.

There are a few points to be had from shooting down planes, but most points come from bombing ground targets. Although you are controlling the fighter, you indirectly control the bomber which tries to keep directly ahead of you. So bombing is a question of reacting quickly as the target comes over the horizon, letting go a stream of bombs, and 'stearing' the bombs on to target. As you bank, the whole scenery on screen tilts. The ground has contours *Combat Lynx* style.

The panel at the bottom of the screen shows the amount of machine gun ammo and bombs remaining. There are two damage indicators, in the form of propellers which get progressively eaten away. One shows the damage to the bomber, the other the damage the fighter has sustained. There are five bombers at the start, and as one gets shot down, another takes its place in front of the fighter.

There is a map, which shows how far through the game you have progressed. If you finally make it to the fuel dump and blow it up, you'll land, refuel, and then go on another mission.




*One bomber down and a few problems as two more fiendish hun hove into view*

## CRITICISM

● **"Whenever a new DURELL game turns up at CRASH towers, it's usually a red letter day. But this isn't up to the company's own high standards. This isn't to say it's no good, it's just not epoch making. The graphics move smoothly and it's jolly colourful. The contour effect is brilliant, but only plays a small part in the game. But I feel it is too involved for a blast-em-up, and not complex enough for an arcade/strategy game. The keys are also quite a handfull. Trying to bomb things, weave about the sky and keep blazing away at the enemy 'planes is really tough. Even the 'easy' level is really tricky. A tenner is quite a lot for this modest little shoot-em-up."**

● *"Deep Strike is a strange mixture between a flight simulator and a decent shoot'em up, unfortunately it doesn't really excel in either of these areas — it is too simple for a flight simulator and the movement is too slow for good shoot em up. The graphics are very well designed and gives an excellent impression of a solid 3D landscape. The control of your plane is too unresponsive for a good 'ole blast. It also seems a pity that the plane that you control is the middle one in the squadron as the plane in front of you often ends up dying because you shoot it accidentaly.* Deep Strike *is a fairly average game from* DURELL, that should go down well with most people."

● "After the tremendous tremendousness of *Fat Worm*, my opinion of DURELL rocketed. This one, though, brought it into more moderation. It's not bad, but I think that it lacks content. Basically, I think it's a shoot 'em up, where more of a simulation would have gone down better. The graphics are very pretty, and the colour is sploshed about fairly elaborately, but I'm sure a little more content wouldn't have gone amiss. Not bad, overall, but could have been better."

*What ho, our chaps unleash a few cabbage crates on the old hun. But watch out for the Hun ace, he's attacking the fighter!*




## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** redefinable: up, down, left, right, bomb, map, abort
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** sluggish
**Use of colour:** attractive
**Graphics:** good perspective effect
**Sound:** good tune, reasonable effects
**Skill levels:** three
**Screens:** large scrolling landscape
**General rating:** neither arcade nor simulator

| | |
|---|---|
| Use of computer | 80% |
| Graphics | 82% |
| Playability | 76% |
| Getting started | 75% |
| Addictive qualities | 79% |
| Value for money | 73% |
| Overall | 79% |

# INSIDE LM TOWERS

**Strapped to the back of your Christmas CRASH is the first ever issue of Newsfield's newest magazine, LM. LLOYD MANGRAM has a look at his fellow conspirators and gives some inside info, PAUL STRANGE looks ahead to Issue One, and SIMON POULTER talks to the man behind it all, Roger Kean.**

## BUT CAN THEY TYPE?

So there they were, gathered round the conference table at LM's London HQ for the first-ever editorial chinwag. Issue Zero was in the inky hands of our printers in darkest Cumbria, and the LM team were desperately trying to think of things for Issue One.

But who are the members of the LM team? Some are familiar, many are new faces. At the top, in the hierarchical sense, are the three publishers. **Franco Frey** is the moneybags, has occasionally contributed to CRASH as technospert, knows how Apricots work and how to get them to talk to humans. Likes: Lauren Bacall, designing houses and fast, large American cars. Hates: dirt, unpunctuality and central heating installers. Being Swiss, he calls gravy 'sauce'.

**Oliver Frey** is LM's Art Editor, and is, of course, known for all those marvellous covers and illustrations that get people talking. Hobbies: old black and white Fred Astair movies, comics and champagne. Hates: airbrushes, cleaning brushes and tidy desks. He's never heard of gravy.

**Roger Kean** is the man who's done it all, so he's just wonderful, and he signs my expenses sheets. He's interviewed by Simon Poulter elsewhere on these pages, so no more on our Editor except to say that he makes fabulous gravy.

Then there's myself, **Lloyd Mangram**, general dogsbody and person voted Most Sensible Man Of The Year by ex-Sinclair User staff. Hobbies: bicycling, gardening, taking photographs and writing letters. Hates: crowds, traffic and being photographed. What more can I say? Well I could always introduce the rest of the team — the ones who do the real work round here . . .

### PAUL STRANGE (Deputy Editor)

Strange by name, weird by nature. Paulie, Groucho or Slim, call him what you like, never tires of telling us where he's coming from and what's going down. It's not just tummy that LM's Dep Ed has tucked under his belt; he's got bags and bags of experience. An unlikely outdoor type, Uncle Paul worked on *The Field* and *Farmers Weekly* before trading in his gumboots and shooting stick for a healthy dose of Sex and Flares and Rock'n'Roll on *Melody Maker*. Hobbies: collecting curries, flooding his kitchen, Soho cinemas, gravy, Her Downstairs, reversing into concrete pillars. Hates: mornings, small children, men who wear make-up, untidy flats.

### DAVID CHEAL (London Editor)

Our man with an earring, a soft voice, a clapped-out Renault 5 and never more than a couple of quid in his pocket was on *SHE* before sliding off to join LM. A professional writer of some standing, The Rum DC delights in thinking up outrageous puns for headlines; his masterpiece was IF YOU KNEW SUSHI, for a piece on Japanese cuisine. David prides himself on having LM's best-kept coiffure (not that there's competition), and spends hours in the Advance Works bogs with his compact mirror, styling mousse, moisturiser, and a copy of *New Socialist*. This guy's so *cooool*. Hobbies: quiche and salad with a glass of white wine, Dorothy's cosmetics, chocolate brownies, a roll-up last thing at night. Hates: gravy, spending money.

### CURTIS HUTCHINSON (Features Editor)

Ludlow's answer to Barry Bucknell! The One They Call Hutchinson was raised by wolves in the wilds of Emsworth, Hampshire, and had a serious feeler-gauge habit by age 25. LM discovered Curtis demurely gobbling a chip butty in the offices of *Films & Filming*, where he was Deputy Editor; we whisked him off to Ludlow in an unmarked Mini, and a star was born. Hobbies: gravy, TV-AM, monkey wrenches, getting married. Hates: chip butties, Top Gun haircuts, phone bills, waiting for the AA, Paul Strange in the morning.

### BARNABY PAGE (Sub-Editor)

Is this man pedantic or what? He's the only person in Ludlow who knows the difference between an aardvark and an ant bear (technically there isn't any, which may be how he knows). A refugee from the salt mines of *Newsweek*'s arts section, Barney likes a quiet night in, cuddling up with his Collins and learning a few thousand words. Hobbies: hyperbolising, *gnocchi*, gravy, surreptitious snouts, being clever-clever. Hates: bad language, bouillabaisse.

### SUE DANDO (Staff Writer)

This well-dressed man-eater spent her formative years on *Oh Boy!* before moving to *My Guy* where she studied the male form and all its foibles in stomach-churning detail. Her conclusions weren't all that favourable, so certain male members on the LM team look extremely dicky. We expect some provocative copy out of her investigations. Hobbies: vox pops, cricket, exotic earrings, getting blotto for as little dosh as possible. Hates: designer stubble, LM bureaucracy. Takes a minimalist approach to gravy.

### RICHARD LOWE (Staff Writer)

Richard is what street cred is all about. Don't be fooled by the bleached-blond hair, he really does walk, talk and look like Paul Weller. And beneath that hard streetwise exterior and Macc Lad bravado lies the heart of a big pussycat. Before joining LM, Mr Lowe was one of the hip young upstarts on *The Hit*. Rickyboy, as he is never known, is the only LM staffer who can seriously challenge Sally Newman in under-the-table drinking. Known to his colleagues as a 'miserable Scouse git'. Hobbies: Beer and Sex and Chips and Gravy. Favourite phrase: 'All right Pete y'bastard!'. Hates: wind-ups.

### SIMON POULTER (Staff Writer)

This guy's the biz, makes a mean cup of coffee and pisses everyone off with his Adrian Edmondson impersonations. And our Man In A Suitcase also has an annoying habit of playing Genesis tapes in broad daylight, sad in one so young. LM discovered Simon while he was mopping up bubble bath in Boots; he claimed he had been bitten by the writing bug (just below the knee), we liked the cut of his jib and so we shanghaied him up to Ludlow. Hobbies: Garfield, gravy, Top Gun haircuts, designer stubble, gravy, Garfield, collecting Boots memorabilia, gravy, poncing freebies, Garfield. Hates: carrying his suitcase, being asked his age in the pub.

### SALLY NEWMAN (Editorial Assistant)

Once a mild, unassuming shorthand teacher, Sally is now known as The Dragon of Grovel Hill. A single cutting glance from Our Sal can be more frightening than a full-blown Paul Strange Monday moodie. Sally came to LM via Newsfield's computer titles in faraway King Street and has quickly established herself as our hi-tech wizard. Telephones hold no terror for Sally; Apricots, Joyces, Frankies, facsimile machines, modems, anglepoise lights and four-gang sockets are our friends, she says. We couldn't work without her. Sally is also an actress, widely acclaimed as the Bo Derek of south Shropshire. Hobbies: celery, rubber-band fights, rib-tickling, staring at pictures of William Shatner, eight pints of Hook Norton. Hates: tidy flats, untidy offices, TV repairmen, gravy, Paul Strange Monday moodies.

### MARY MORRIS (Editorial Assistant)

The larger-than-life hair is only the start of it; this is one enigmatic lady, ruled by her secret passions for fast Fifties cars and Mickey Rourke. Watch out for The Woman In Black if you happen to be sunning yourself in Greece next summer — Mary goes *au naturel*. Hobbies: veggie food, good clean living. Hates: being recognised on Greek beaches, and meat-based gravies.

### FRAN MABLE (Editorial Assistant)

Fran was a simple country girl, spending her days riding her horse, mailing binders, and preparing to settle down to marital bliss. Then she discovered LM . . . Hobbies: telephone repairmen, photocopy repairmen, central heating installers, breaking telephones. Hates: filing, mailing binders, making gravy, filing and filing.



### GORDON DRUCE (Assistant Art Editor)

Gordon has worked on the computer mags since — since a long time, wielding scalpel, ruler and rapidograph with equal dexterity. He's almost as quiet as David Cheal, but spends less time over his hair (not much less). Hobbies: uncovering unlikely bands and playing their music to everyone in the art department, fast open-top British sports cars and gravy sandwiches. Hates: obvious groups.

### BEEZER (Photographer)

Beezer comes from Bristol. He moved to London during the summer to seek his fortune and ended up living in a shoebox in Ladbroke Grove. He's now found more spacious accommodation in Battersea, where he pays the Rachmanite rent of £1.25 per week (inc). Beezer is 21 and has taken photographs for Bristol's listings magazine *Venue*, *NME*, and *Echoes*. Hobbies: meeting people, drinking scrumpy, submitting invoices written on scraps of toilet-paper in yellow wax crayon. Hates: meeting landladies, landladies' gravy, the Institute Of Chartered Accountants.

That's the LM Team.

**A multitude of covers coming off the printing line. 269,000 copies were printed.**





The LM team gathered in fabulous Islington last month to practise smiling. **Back row**, left to right: Gordon Druce, Mary Morris, Sue Dando, David Cheal, Simon Poulter, Barnaby Page. **Front row**: Roger Kean, Paul Strange, Richard Lowe, Curtis Hutchinson. Oliver Frey was back in Ludlow slaving over a hot palette, Lloyd Mangram missed the train, Sally Newman and Fran Mable were still in the pub and Beezer was behind the camera.

## ROGER WILCO

**ROGER KEAN** stares suspiciously at the Walkman in front of him. It's probably the first (and only) time he's been interviewed by one of his own employees, but it doesn't deter him for long; Newsfield's editorial mastermind is seldom stumped for words.

The man who created CRASH, ZZAP! and AMTIX! decided to launch a new youth title after observing the masses of mail flooding in at CRASH Towers.

'The letters seemed to be fighting to get away from computers and to talk about other things,' he says. 'We thought it would be interesting to have a Newsfield magazine similar in style but dealing with a much wider range of subjects. The concept was simple — CRASH, but not about computers. Obviously it's grown a bit since then.

'We felt there was a hole in the market for something with a wider base than pop music or soap operas. It's a bit of a challenge — few magazines have succeeded in this area. The gamble is that the style and fanaticism that has been generated with Newsfield's titles will carry on.

'At first the name was a joke. Lloyd Mangram had been answering the letters on CRASH and ZZAP!, so LM became a working title — Lloyd Mangram's Leisure Monthly. It stuck — much to Lloyd's horror.'

What age group is LM aimed at?

'Principally 17 upwards, but we are still aiming to write the magazine in the same style as the computer magazines. I'm hoping that LM will appeal to younger readers as well as older. And if we write for young adults too, some of the more tendentious issues will become easier to cope with.'

Where will LM be placed on the newsstands?

'Away from the music papers, otherwise it's labelled as a music paper. It has to sit with the lifestyle magazines like *The Face* or *i-D*, though it's nothing like them either in look, flavour or content. I think it's the only place it can go.'

Is it a young man's version of *Woman* or *SHE*?

'A horrible thought! It probably is in a way, but LM will be of much more general interest than the women's magazines.'

No plans for knitting patterns, then?

'No, but we might do a gardening column!'

What about reader involvement?

'It's very important and one of the biggest selling aspects of any magazine. Readers have good ideas and I hope that LM readers will respond as they've done on the computer magazines. I hope that LM will have even more letters, and aggressive ones at that.'

Write on, Rog.



**At 30,000 copies per hour, pages of LM Issue Zero flash past the Hutchinson camera at our printer.**

## GIVE US A STRANGE LOOK

the first LM editorial meeting has already passed into the history books as an earthshattering event ranking with The Battle Of Britain, The Charge Of The Light Brigade and Pearl Harbour.

It was a truly shocking and debauched affair, and among other things it gave us a chance to discuss where we're at, where we're going, what's going down, what's going up and where we're coming from (man).

Naturally, we couldn't *all* be present at LM's palatial offices in Islington — Lloyd and Oli missed the train (feeble excuse no 546), while Sally and Fran were nailed to The Bull bar in Ludlow the night before (disgraceful).

But for those of us who could make it, the first editorial meeting was unforgettable. And being the decent chaps that we are, we thought we'd let you in on some highly secret projects that we discussed on the day.

Like, what's going to be in LM's first on-sale issue out on 15 January?

Well, to start with we're going to open up our regular extended feature slot called Man In A Suitcase. Each month LM's intrepid reporter Simon Poulter will don his porkpie hat, slip on his shades and head for a national hotbed of sin (he hopes). Simon will be staying in a city for a week and bringing back an in-depth report of what he's been up to, who he's met, what bands are emerging, what haircuts are in, what are the best shops, what are the best nightclubs, what sports facilities there are, what the local radio station is up to and what's happening on the street.

For Issue One Simon hits Birmingham, and for future LMs he's off to Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich and all points north. Well crucial.



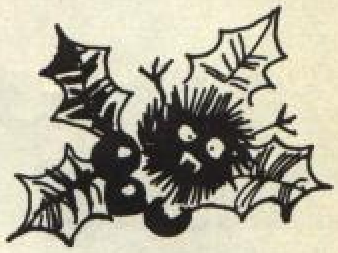
**Pierce Brosnan gets touched up for a scene in THE FOURTH PROTOCOL — report coming next month.**

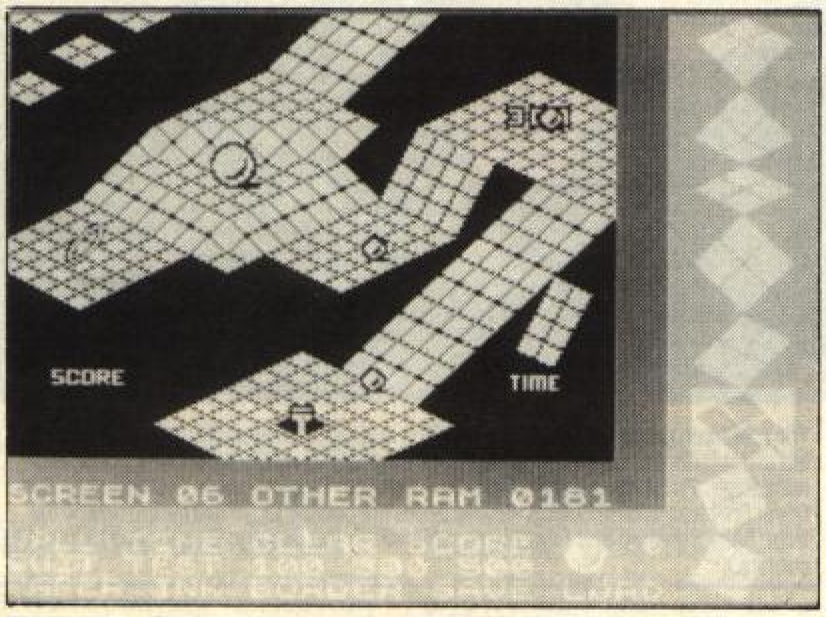
Other things we've got lined up are a round-up of the blossoming cheapie video labels, a Richard Lowe rant about stupid sports, a picture feature on an inspired 21-year-old Croydonian photographer called Martin Eidemak, a rundown of the fashions that are going to hit the high-street stores in the spring, a guide to jumble-sale bargain-spotting, interviews with Paul McGann (star of TV's *The Monocled Mutineer* and Pierce Brosnan (star of the soon-to-be-released *Fourth Protocol* movie), reviews of what's new on the turntable, the screen, the video and the bookshelf, AND all our regular columns (Lloyd's Word Up, Minson's Mondo Bizarro, Hassles, Prize Crossword, Station To Station and the Consumer Guide).

All this and pop interviews too? Yeah, we've got 'em á-gogo: Icicle Works in Liverpool, The Human League in Norwich and a few others that we've had to swear to keep secret.

So now you know. LM Issue One hits the bookstands on 15 January and it's going to be an imperative purchase. See you then.

# MARBLE MADNESS CONSTRUCTION SET






*The icon driven construction screen; Cameron obviously has a sick sense of humour*

**Producer: Melbourne House**
Retail Price: **£8.95**

Following the recent spate of *Marble Madness* clones, along comes the grand master himself in the form of a construction set from MELBOURNE HOUSE. Once more the hero of the game is Mr Spherical, a ball, who takes to the slippery slopes of the crooked palace of power. The game is split into two parts; firstly the game . . . Life as a marble can't be an easy one; especially when you're trapped in a strange world of unreality, where the laws of



physics that you once held true no longer apply. So, to pass the time Mr Spherical enters himself for the local races. The aim of these is a simple one - to reach the end of each level before your time runs out.

With four directions at your disposal, you must keep Mr Spherical under control as he winds his weary way to the bottom of the racetrack. Racing over the flat planes isn't so bad, but the narrow ramps and bridges can prove extremely hazardous - one small roll out of place, and with a resounding scream poor old Mr Spherical plunges to his death in the murky swamplands which surround the track. Many creatures inhabit the swamplands, and some of these occasionally force themsleves up onto the racetrack - in search of any slow-witted contestants who may fall prey to the difficult corners. The most notorious of the lot are the evil marbles who roll carelessly along the plains, they also bring with them their sproingy mates who move in a slinky fashion on the surface of the slopes. Contact with these, and any other of the various nasties leads to obliteration as well as a loss of time.

If you become fed up with the preset patterns of the racetrack, there is an option on the title screen which allows you to construct your own. The construction process is controlled by the four standard direction keys plus a fire key. Running down the right hand side of the construction screen is a selection of the various planes that can be used to make up your revised track. They include two angular planes, one flat, one vertical, a left and right slant and two steep slants. Along the bottom of the screen is a text option window. Using this, you can place oddments on the screen such as time displays, points scored, and marks of 100, 300 and 500. These can be put anywhere your heart desires. All of these options are accessed by moving your arrow cursor onto the one you want and pressing fire. Doing this allows you to move the item around the screen until you find a place to plonk it down. Once you have successfully completed the construction of a screen, select Test and a marble appears at the top - now it's time to see if your Great Design has worked, or like all the other Great Designs has it disappeared down the plughole . . .

## CRITICISM

● **"I must confess that after a little while I was quite getting into designing my own screens but when it came to actually playing them the game began to annoy me. Graphically this is run-of-the-mill for this type of game, your ball skids around the playing area fairly smoothly, the backgrounds are detailed and there are no attribute problems anywhere in the game. The sound is very good, a tune plays continuously on the title screen and throughout the game. On the whole if you are a fan of this type of game then perhaps this will appeal to you."**

● *"Marble Madness looks far to much like the old* Gyroscope *to be much of a success. I'm not really too keen on this type of game anyway, but this one is just bad news. The graphics are poor, and though the movement of the marble is fairly smooth, the whole thing is just a mite too unplayable."*

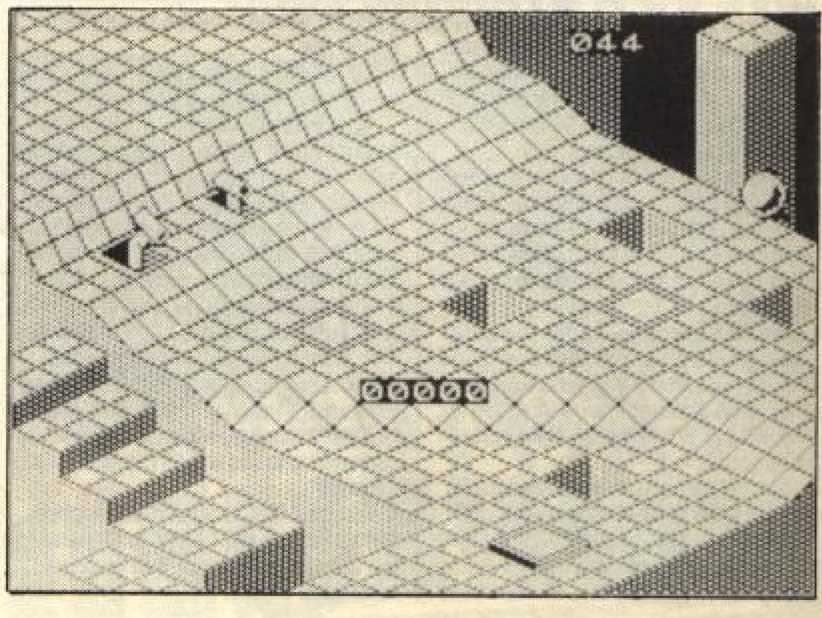
● "I didn't really like the arcade machine that much, so I was a bit cautious when it came to reviewing the computer version. To be honest, *Marble Madness* is very badly written. The graphics are of the monochromatic kind, and with these you can't go far wrong, although the way they are manipulated is very slow and jerky. It took an amazingly long time to actually move the ball from one side of the screen to the other — but once done, it takes ages to flick to the next screen. Apart from being unplayable I also found it very unaccurate — constantly I found myself disappearing down holes that weren't there, and rebounding off invisible walls. This is a very bad game, and considering it's from the people that brought us *Gyroscope* it is even worse."

## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** redefinable, up, down, left, right, fire
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** like nailing jelly to the ceiling
**Use of colour:** monochromatic play area
**Graphics:** detailed, with good animation
**Sound:** excellent rendition of the arcade tune
**Skill levels:** one
**Screens:** 11
**General rating:** a good idea poorly executed

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | 65% |
| **Graphics** | 71% |
| **Playability** | 54% |
| **Getting started** | 69% |
| **Addictive qualities** | 62% |
| **Value for money** | 61% |
| **Overall** | **61%** |

*The game in action, it looks like Cameron's about to take a tumble*



# KAT TRAP

**Producer: Domark**
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Design Design**

Way back in the June issue of CRASH a rather unusual competition was launched. The task: to design a game for the Spectrum. The prize: world fame and fortune in the software industry. Well, you never know! The winner of this prestigious competition was Jonathan Eggleton, selected from acres of entries for his design - *Kat Trap*. Programmed by DESIGN DESIGN and marketed by DOMARK the game is now in a finished state and ready for review.

Time has moved on a bit and we're now in the 24th century, and Earth does look in a sorry state. Pounded by solar explosions and abandoned by the Earthlings, the Earth has now become home for a strange and dangerous breed of creatures called Kat Men. Now that the solar explosions have died down, the Earth people are thinking about moving back into their homeland. However, the Kat Men aren't going to give up their new found home without a fight. In enforced exile, the Earth people plot to rid their home of the evils of the Kat Men for good, and to get the planet back into the bargain. Being a largely unimaginative lot they send down a Multi Terrain Exploration Droid known to his mechanical chums as M.T-ED. This cute little robot is more used to travelling over rough terrain than to fighting it out to the death with hordes of strange and nasty aliens. Accompanied by Hercules 1, a maintenance and combat droid, M.T-ED. is beamed down and the dynamic duo begin their quest. Unfortunately things go horribly wrong as soon as their little tin feet touch the planet's soil, as Hercules 1 is kidnapped by the Kat Men and whisked away. Now with two tasks instead of one, M.T-ED has to blast his way through the ruined remains of this green and pleasant globe, and rescue his metal mate into the bargain.

There are fourteen sections to M.T's task, each taking place in a different location on Earth. In each of these sections are many dangers which he must confront. He's a simple droid and not really cut out for all this fighting, therefore he starts out with only a few basic weapons bolted on this frame. Luckily, other sorts of artillery can be picked up along the way by simply walking into them, these are then displayed at the top of the screen and can be selected when needed. Grenades, rockets, lasers and even water are all used to help M.T-ED in his mission.



The reason for this array of different weapons is simple. Not just the kat Men have taken up residence on earth. Ice Men, Fire Demons and Mekno Cats (who'll eat anything!) - to name but a few - have also moved in, and each type of nasty requires a certain type of weapon to defeat him.

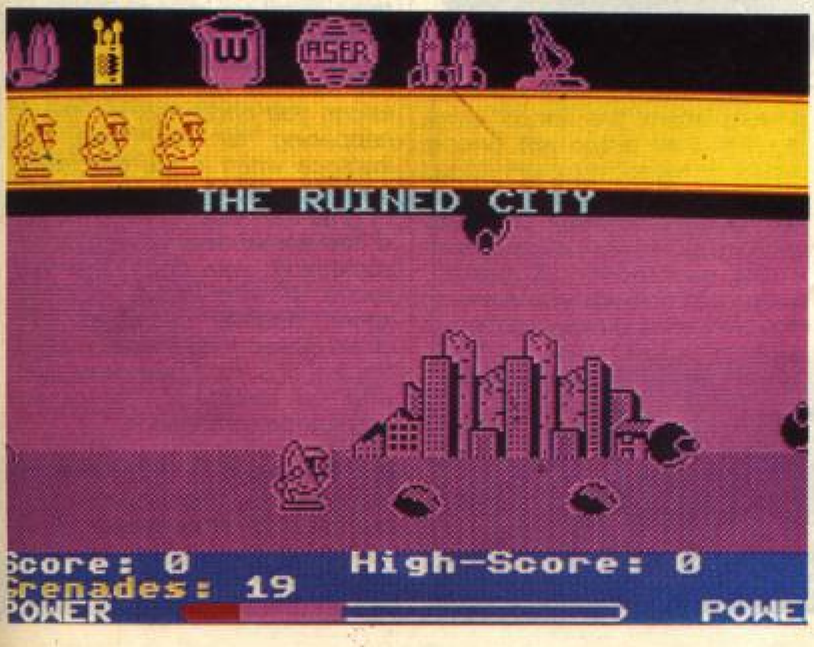
The screen scrolls from left to right and our hero has to shoot the nasties and pick up useful objects before they get him first. If M.T-ED does get biffed by a nasty, he falls on his bonce and is stunned for a few seconds. When this happens he loses one of his droid lives. Not all of the nasties are lethal. For instance, in the Charred Forest the ghosts simply make life very awkward by stealing any weapons that are lying around. M.T-Ed must therefore be very quick off the mark in this situation.

M.T-Ed moves in a realistic mechanical way, and can jump over any monsters that he's too slow to shoot. Being a Multi-Terrain Droid he can cope quite well with some of the bizzare landscapes which he must encounter. Although the Alps, where he has to sproing from one peak to another, might give him some serious trouble. M.T-Ed must struggle through each terrain until he reaches the Nerve Centre, where he has to rescue Hercules 1, but to get there he must even cross the bed of an underground lake and romp through a castle. Once Hercules 1 has been rescued there is another small game-ette to be completed before the end is in sight for M.T-ED.

On the bottom of the main screen is the score with the current high score for the player to aim for. Power is shown at the bottom of the screen, and when this reaches zero M.T-Ed loses one of his lives. At the top of the screen are his lives and the type of weapons he has collected.




*The forest stage. M.T. blasts a meanie. He's got a full set of weapons, so it should be plain sailing from here*




*In the ruined city Jon Eggelton's hero faces two hazards — the balls are irritating, but the meanies on the right are fatal!*

## CRITICISM

● **"*Kat Trap* is a fast furious game that is more than just a trek around a few bits of scenery. You really have to look at each nasty before you blow his head off, or you could choose the wrong weapon and get thrown around yourself. The graphics are well designed but don't seem to be solid enough to look real. Sound is a bit basic, but the spot effects serve thier purpose. I wouldn't mind if someone put this in my Christmas stocking (wink wink, nudge nudge, 'nuff said Santa)."**

● *"The first couple of levels are fairly easy, but they do prove to be very frustrating, after these two the levels become a lot more challenging so the game as a whole proves to be very compelling. Graphically Kat Trap is slick, the characters are well animated and the backgrounds are colourful. The sound is a bit on the lame side, there are no tunes and the spot effects are minimal. I quite liked this as it plays well and it looks good, well worth a look."*

● " We've seen plenty of preview versions of *Kat Trap*, so the finished version isn't anything unexpected. When playing the more complete versions, I didn't think much of it — it seemed very like an average sort of shoot em up. After giving the finished version a good half hour, though, I began to think I was hooked. Immediately, I wasn't hit by it, but perseverence certainly reaped its reward. I hope DESIGN DESIGN can get together with DOMARK again and produce more of this sort of game. It might well do them both a lot of good! "

## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** definable, up, down, left, right, fire
**Joystick:** Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** speedy
**Use of colour:** adequate
**Graphics:** detailed and amusing
**Sound:** the odd spot effects
**Skill levels:** one
**Screens:** 196
**General rating:** a humorous little shoot-em-up

| | |
|---|---|
| Use of computer | 81% |
| Graphics | 82% |
| Playability | 86% |
| Getting started | 83% |
| Addictive qualities | 86% |
| Value for money | 83% |
| Overall | 84% |

# TERMINUS

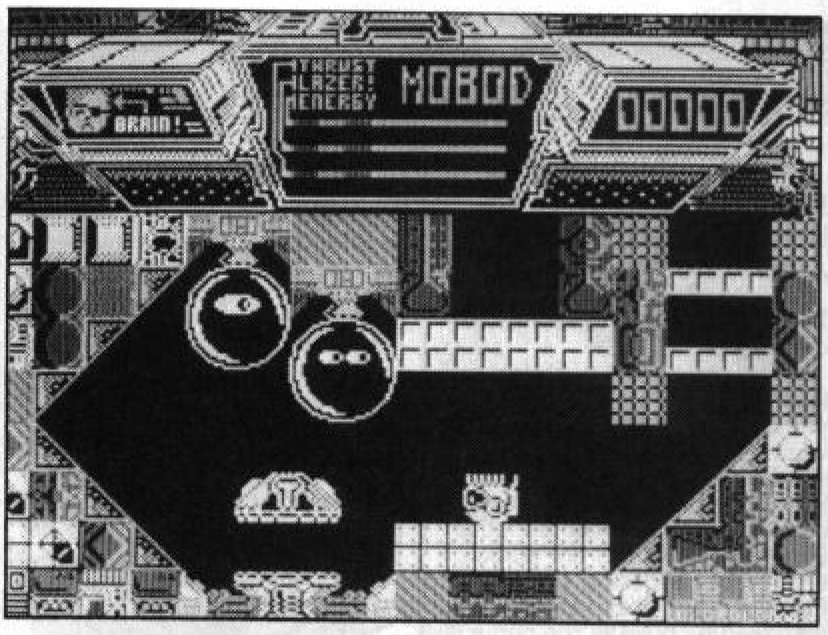
**Producer: Mastertronic**
Retail Price: **£2.99**
Author: **P Hargreaves**

The Wanglers are very anti-school. In fact they're so against the system that they are campaigning for less lessons and more free time. However, the Emperor takes a very dim view of this, and has taken serious steps to cut down on this type of insubordination by arresting Brains, the Wangler's leader. Poor old Brains has been locked up in Terminus, the most impregnable prison in the galaxy.

Brains' colleagues decide that he must be rescued from the prison so that their quest can continue. They set out for the prison in order to help their friend.

There are four friends altogether and each one has his own special talent which he can put to good use in attempting to release their leader. Each of them has a protective suit which shields them from the force-fields and other perils which await them. However, these only work if their batteries are fully charged. The energy level for each character's suit is shown at the top of the main screen. The control panel also shows how much thrust energy and lasers they have left. When any of these levels reach zero, then that particular character perishes, and the others have to carry on without him.

Mobod and Xann move by flying. However, once their thrust energy drops off, they have to find somewhere to recharge before they can become airborne again. Magno is a cat burglar, although he doesn't look like one. His main talent is being able to stick to ceilings in order to avoid traps. Spex does possess legs, but he prefers to bounce everywhere for some odd reason. You can only control one of these characters at a time, but they can be called in to action at any time as long as you're on a teleport pad.




*The transformer on the left will allow you to change between characters*

## CRITICISM

● **"The game is very similar to *Tantalus* but it isn't really as playable or as addictive, as it takes a long time to get into. Graphically I can see a lot of people really hating this as there is almost too much colour, I like it as there isn't any colour clash and there is a lot of detail. The sound is a bit on the lame side, no tunes and only a few spot effects. I think that this will only really appeal to *Tantalus* fans as it doesn't really offer much to the arcade player."**

● *"Terminus contains nothing much more than* Tantalus *did. The game is immediately attractive. As with* Tantalus, *the screen is jam packed with pixels, all them full of colour a detail. But the game itself doesn't have much substance. The idea of controlling different characters is nothing new in arcade adventures, but, seems to work well and is one of* Terminus's *good points.* Terminus *features some nice touches; like the dissolving walls and different bullets — but I didn't really like the game as a whole very much."*

● "Golly! It's *Tantalus* with new sprites! I didn't like that program , and I don't like this. All the main characters have really awful control methods which makes the game frustrating from the very beginning. It's even more frustrating trying to work out where to go and there isn't much in the way of

# SPEED KING 2

**Producer: Mastertronic**
Retail Price: **£2.99**
Author: **Derek Brewster**

You are a contestant in a motorbike race. The action is viewed from behind your bike, the track scrolling towards the player gives the impression that the bikes are actually moving. At the start of the race, four lights count downwards and then you're off. The bike is capable of travelling at up to 192 mph, although it isn't such a good idea to do this when you're travelling around particularly tight bends. The speed at which you are travelling, which lap you're on and your position in the race are all shown at the top of the main screen, so that you can keep an accurate check on your progress.

The program includes a choice of track, each based on one of the world's famous racing circuits. The tracks involved are Donnington, Silverstone, San Marino, Anderstorp, Paul Ricard, Jarama, Brands Hatch, Monza and Daytona. The track you want to race around can be selected from the menu options at the beginning of the game. The player can ride from as little as one track right up to nine, if he/she is feeling particularly fit. There is a two player option so that you and a mate can compete against each other. In the two player option there are just two competitors, yourself and your opponent. In this case, the screen splits into two halves so that the view from each racer is shown.

If a player mis-judges a corner during the race, their bike comes off the track and slows right down to zero. The player loses valuable time when this happens and has to get back on the road and re-accelerate to top speed. If the player hits another bike, then once again their speed drops off and more time is lost.

*Right at the start, can you fight your way from the back of the field*




## CRITICISM

● **"This is possibly the worst racing game that has come in this year, it has poor graphics that don't seem to speed up as you do (the white lines in the road go virtually the same speed at 60mph as they do at 190mph) and and the sound is no more than spot effects and growling. The game play is about as compulsive as a dead cat, if you don't come within the top ten in any lap on your first go then there is something wrong with you. The two player mode is its only redeeming feature. On the whole this may appeal to you are really into racing games but I'd keep well away from it."**

● *"This seems to be a very bad copy of* Full Throttle, *but with a two player game added. The two player game is a stupid affair, as there aren't any impartial bikers on the track and the first person to make a mistake usually looses.I felt that the game didn't really inform you enough of the things happening to your bike; for instance when in the two player game you don't know whose skidding as the noise for each person is the same, and when you hit something you don't feel like you're slowing down, but the speed counter decreases. I'm afraid Speed King II doesn't have the feel of a good bike game, and with Full Throttle at 2.99 it's got some good competition."*

● "The graphics are incredibly bad, and the game is an awful attempt of a *Full Throttle* copy. The only thing that it has over *Full Throttle* is the fact that the characters don't flicker, and if that's two

clues to help. The graphics are nice, but rather superficial and they don't really interact with the game in any way. If you liked *Tantalus* I suppose you'd like this, but personally I prefer more arcade action and more adventure in my arcade adventures.''

## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** different for each character. Mobod and Xann: Q fly up, M laser fire, O left, P right. Magno: Q fly up, M laser fire, O left, P right, A detach. Spex: Q increase bounce, A decrease bounce, O left, P right, M fire
**Joystick:** Kempston, Sinclair
**Keyboard play:** responsive
**Use of colour:** a riot of colour
**Graphics:** detailed
**Sound:** a few spot effects
**Skill levels:** one
**Screens:** 512
**General rating:** unoriginal and confusing

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | 65% |
| **Graphics** | 76% |
| **Playability** | 53% |
| **Getting started** | 56% |
| **Addictive qualities** | 48% |
| **Value for money** | 52% |
| **Overall** | **52%** |

years of improvement, I'd rather keep the original. The impression of movement that was quite well put onto *Full Throttle* is totally non existent on this one, apart from the little stripes down the middle of the road. I think ELITE can rest assured that there is no competition from this whatsoever, because it's dire.''

## COMMENTS

**Control keys:** Player One: Q lean left, W lean right, A accelerate, D decelerate. Player Two: O lean left, P lean right, L accelerate, . Decelerate
**Joystick:** Kempston, Interface 2
**Keyboard play:** responsive
**Use of colour:** minimal
**Graphics:** dire
**Sound:** rather like a very excited mosquito
**Skill levels:** ten different tracks of varying difficulty
**Screens:** scrolling play area
**General rating:** there are plenty of better race games

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | 48% |
| **Graphics** | 45% |
| **Playability** | 41% |
| **Getting started** | 56% |
| **Addictive qualities** | 36% |
| **Value for money** | 50% |
| **Overall** | **42%** |

# KINGS KEEP

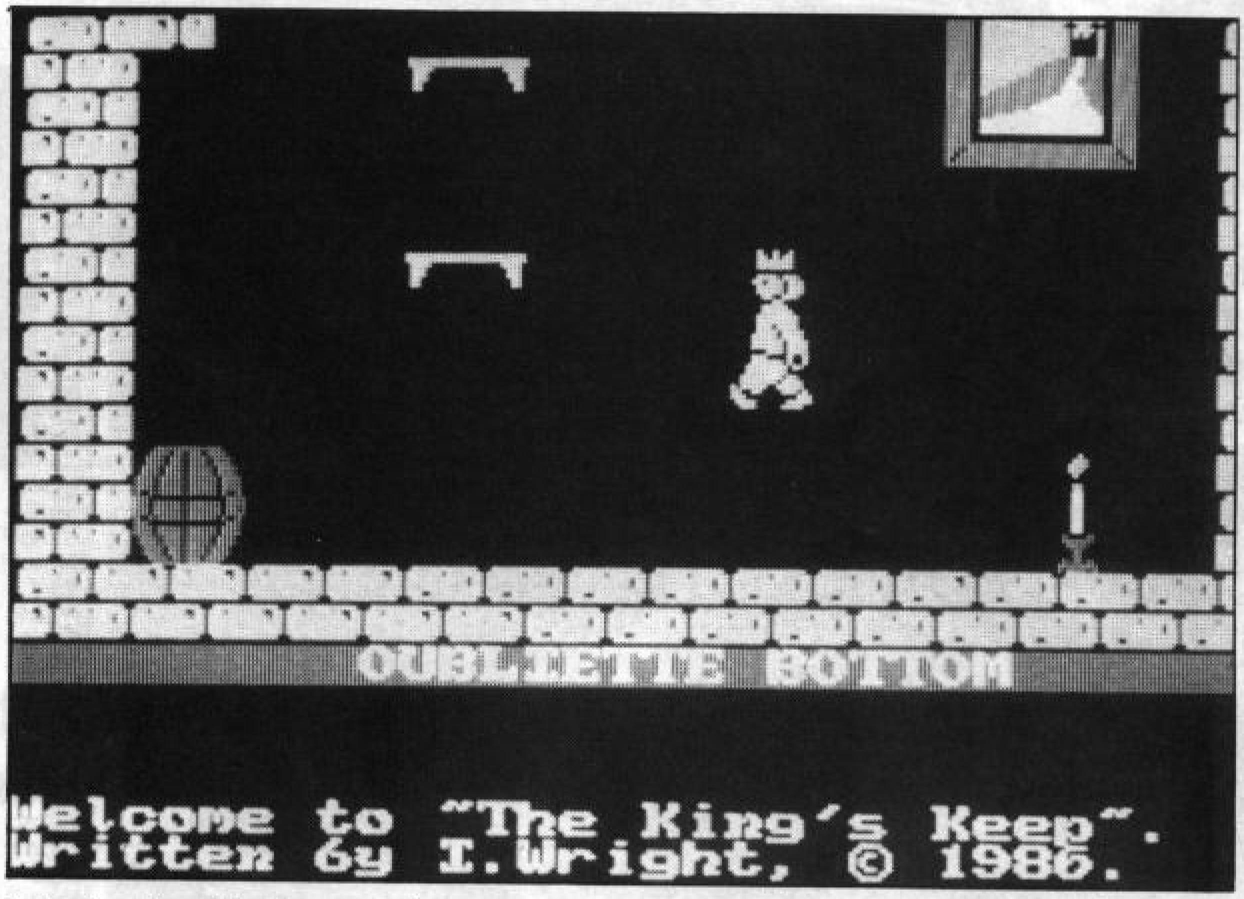
**Producer: Firebird Silver Range**
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Ian Wright**

Harold is a very nasty King. He rules his kingdom by bullying the inhabitants and locking up their cabbage patch dolls if they're naughty. However, King Harold has a son who is a little more broadminded than his dad. Harold's son objects strongly to the way that his dad rules the country. But King Harold knows that his son has sympathies with the locals and won't let him out of the castle in case he tries to start a rebellion. So Harold's son will remain a prisoner for ever and ever unless you can help him to escape from his father's evil clutches.

Harold Junior really wants to escape from his father's tyranical rule, but first be has to find a way out of the castle. Old Kingy has been very sly and has blocked up some doors and made moving around the castle very difficult. Luckily Harold junior is a smart lad, and by using everyday objects which he comes across on his travels, he can attempt an escape.

When the imprisoned prince enters a new room in the castle, the location scrolls across the bottom of the screen. In the same way conversations can be carried out with the various characters who live in the castle. These characters often give Harold's son hints and tips regarding which objects are useful to collect. There are options to give objects, examine them fully and use them. The coversation with the characters can be carried out by selecting the TALK option.

Harold Junior moves around the castle on foot, but he does have quite springy legs which is just as well really, because some rooms can only be entered and exited by way of platforms and large jumps.




*Welcome to Kings Keep, and you're welcome to it*

## CRITICISM

● **''*Kings Keep* is yet another trite arcade adventure. To be fair this has some nice features like the messages under the playing window but all in all I couldn't really play this for more than ten minutes without losing what's left of my sanity. The graphics are pretty much run-of-the-mill for this type of game, lots of colour but not much detail. The sound is also a bit limp, no tunes and very few effects. As always the instructions given were a little lacking in content so it could take a while for you to learn the ins and outs of the game.''**

● *''A suprise!! FIREBIRD have come out with another budget arcade adventure. I'm sorry to say this, but, I really have got to hate this type of game. There seems to be very little programming thought involved in this type of game nowadays. The characters are fairly large but aren't detailed enough to look like real things. Colour is well used and clashes are almost non-existent. Kings Keep is very easy to get into; but basically the game is another boring adventure that doesn't exite any of my feelings, and the result is a very dead end game. Only for the dedicated arcade aventurer, with a small budget.''*

● ''This is the sort of thing that gives budget a bad name. Back in the days when full price meant a program and budget meant a few hours doodling with a game designer this would have been acceptible, but these days it belongs in the waste bin. There is nothing original in this game at all. Just think what you could do with two quid instead. Hire a video, buy a paperback, just about anything, just don't buy this''

## COMMENTS

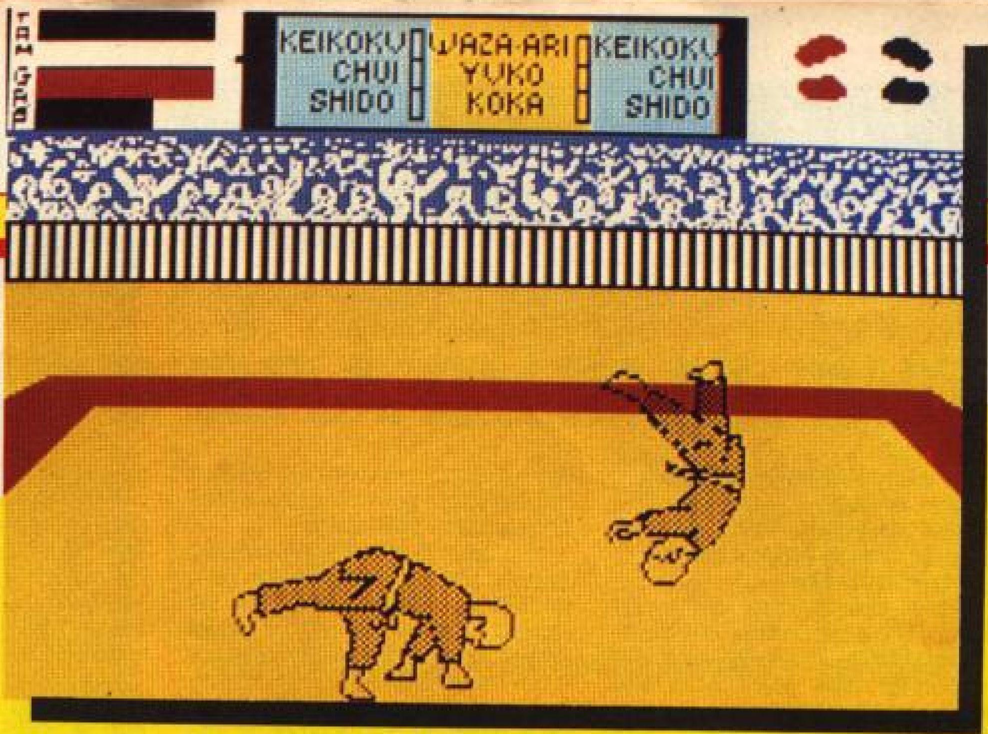
**Control keys:** jump Q; left O; right P, pick up 1; inventory 2; list commands 5
**Joystick:** Kempston
**Keyboard play:** strange at first, but quite straight-forward really
**Use of colour:** reasonable
**Graphics:** dull
**Sound:** unusual spot effects
**Skill levels:** one
**Screens:** budget tat

| | |
|---|---|
| **Use of computer** | 42% |
| **Graphics** | 50% |
| **Playability** | 58% |
| **Getting started** | 50% |
| **Addictive qualities** | 31% |
| **Value for money** | 45% |
| **Overall** | **42%** |


Konami®
SHAO-LIN'S ROAD™
'The arcade hit... ...in your home!'
Screen shots from arcade version – home micro versions may differ.
The smash hit follow up to 'Yie Ar Kung-Fu'
Spectrum
Commodore 64
and
Amstrad versions
coming soon.
Our hero has finally mastered the secret martial art "CHIN'S SHAO-LIN" but is trapped by triad gangs. With kicks and other secret powers, escape from and travel SHAO-LIN'S road to freedom!
THE EDGE
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# PREVIEW

*Coming soon to a Spectrum near you!*




*A successful throw is executed by one of the contestants in a closely fought bout of Judo*

## C-UCHI C-UCHI COO

Before any of you think 'just another martial arts game', and turn to the next page, there's no getting away from the fact that *Uchi Mata* from **MARTECH** looks pretty special.

Instead of simulating the ancient art of beating people up, this game is all about the subtle art of judo. Here brawn and speed aren't everything. A thorough knowledge of the moves, and using your 'weight' to throw your opponent are essential skills. Instead of just a single joystick move to accomplish an attack, a series of joystick moves must come together to produce a winning manoeuvre. The first thing you must do is to try to get a good grip on your opponent. Once a grip has been obtained, a 'grip' light comes on, you must then attempt a throw. If this attempt fails, you'll have to start again with a new grip.

There is a diagram in the top right hand corner of the screen showing the position of each player's feet. This must be used to work out how a player's weight is distributed, and thus what might be the best move to use to throw your opponent. Whenever an attack is made, it can be countered if a player is quick enough. If you get thrown, then again, fast reflexes are needed to ensure that you land on your feet. When a throw is made, a referee appears in place of the feet diagram and shows how many points have been scored. If a player manages to score ten points, the bout is over, otherwise the winner is the player who accumulates the most points during the bout.

The game features a great deal of animation as the contestants fly through the air, and really seems to offer something more than just another beating up session. It has been a long time since there has been anything new on the martial arts scene, and beat-em-ups generally seem to have gone through a thin patch, so it's good to see **MARTECH** trying to breathe new life into what seemed to be a rather lacklustre genre.

## SHOCKED AND STUNNED

You've had shoot-em-up's in space, you've had shoot-em-up's in cars, lets face it, you've blasted things in just about every conceivable environment. So *Cosmic Shock Absorber* makes no attempt to give any sort of reason. **MARTECH** figure that the computer junkie doesn't need a reason for blasting things, just give a guy a gun and something to fire at, and the chances are he'll get the message.

The hero of the game, Cosmic Shock Absorber in person, is a sort of fourth rate superhero. He's the sort of superhero who's not only dumb enough to put his pants outside his trousers, he'd even get them inside out in the process. Still, civilization as we know it is teatering on the brink. mankind as usual is looking around for somebody else to do the dirty work. Batman's taking a bath, Superman's busy shooting another film, Wonder Woman is staying in and washing her hair, so who is left to save the human race - Cosmic Shock Absorber, that's who.

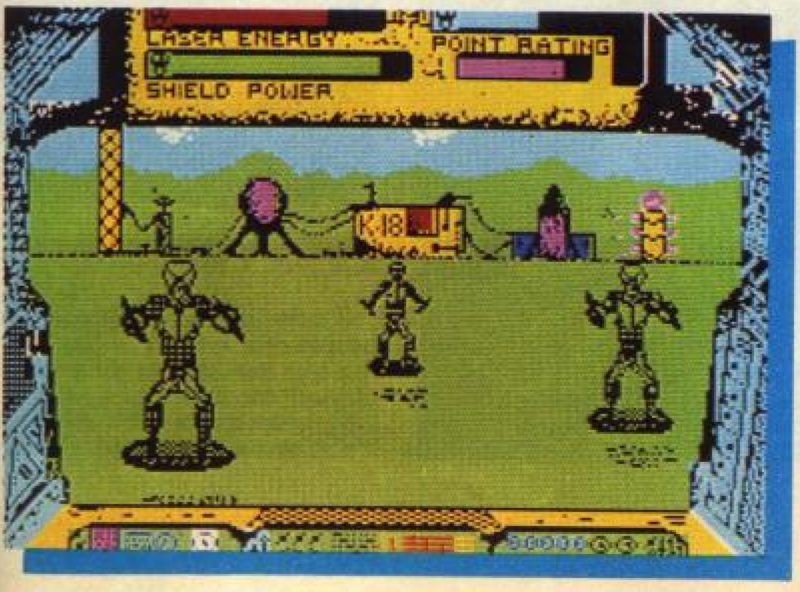
So our fearless supernurd boldly goes out there to blast away at the nasty aliens. Unfortunately, he's a bit skint, so all he can afford is a reconditioned hyper zapper gun. Trouble is, it keeps going wrong. It either conks out entirely or the controls reverse, or the ammunition falls out of the ammo clip.

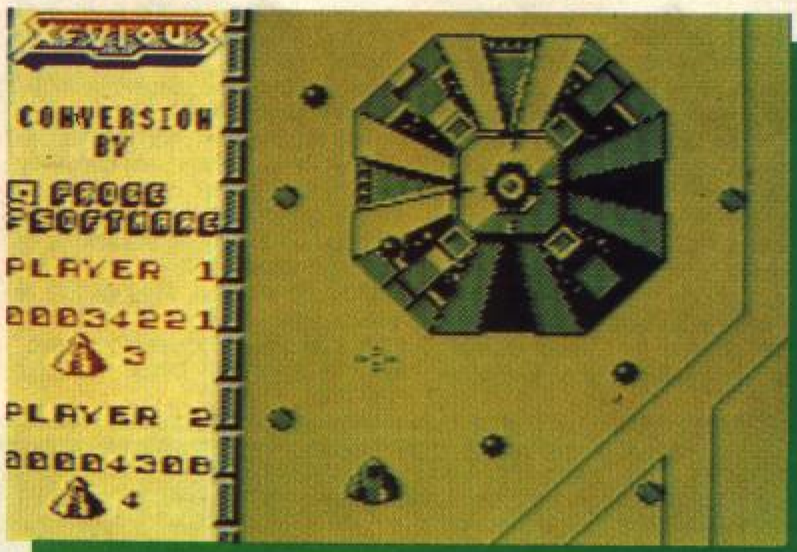
With this amazing weapon he boldly goes forth to try to save the earth. The first stage has vultures dive bombing old Cosmic, and if he lets them get away, they'll blow up a power station. Then Cosmic faces the deadly threat. Carrots errupting from a desert no less! Unless he deals with them fast, the carrots will sprout legs and machine guns.

Last section is just a mega blast. Cosmic faces a hideous threat from the lake people. He's just got to blast away at absolutely anything.

For a mere £7.95, *Cosmic Shock Absorber* offers some pretty good blasting with lots of colour and action. Just the sort of thing to brighten up a long winter evening.

*Cosmic faces up to the terrible threat of the floating alien nasties. Zap-em quick or they'll get that power station!*




*Our fearless fighter tackles a rather large alien ship. Where do you start?*

## DEVIOUS XEVIOUS

*It looks like the Spectrum is going to be host to yet another arcade conversion, this time it's the cult classic Xevious.* In case you don't already know, this is a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up which pits you against the evil forces of Xevious. These dastardly villians are trying to annihilate the population of Earth (whats new?).

Apparently the Xevious people inhabited the Earth eons ago, but they were forced to leave by the then oncoming ice age. Now they're back, and they're a little irate with the civilisation that has sprung up in their absence and taken over their planet.

You play the part of a Solvalu (super techno jet fighter) pilot. You're the last in line of Earth's defences, and (you've guessed it) it's your job to protect the Earth from these invaders. You continously fly north, bombing enemy installations and shooting all the vile 'n nasty Xevious fighters that get in you way.

Your final goal is the brain of the attacking Xevious forces; the Andor Genesis Mother Ship, this you must blow up with a direct hit to her nuclear reactor. Even this heroic act is not enough to stop the invasion however. Once you have destroyed the mothership the whole business starts all over again - but with a little more violence this time around!. . . .

PREVIEW



# THE ALIENS ARE COMING

After many months in preparation, *Aliens* is almost with us. This space adventure from ELECTRIC DREAMS, closely follows the plot of the smash-hit film.

Ripley, sole survivor of the first film, Alien, is picked up after floating round space in suspended animation for many years. When she finally reaches Earth, her story of the battle with the aliens isn't believed by the powers that be. While Ripley has been floating in space, a colony has been set up on the remote planet where she encountered the deadly beasts. A generator has been installed to turn the poisonous atmosphere into something more breathable. When all contact is lost with the base, Ripley agrees to head a team of crack marines to try and find out what has happened to the colonists.

The game has been designed by **Mark Eyles**, the man responsible for *Back to the Future*, and programmed by **SOFT MACHINE**. You play the part of Ripley, controlling not only her, but also the crack squad of space marines who have been sent in to clear up the mess. Ripley has to mastermind an attempt to retake the whole base from the marauding invaders.

This game requires a combination of tactical skill and powerful blasting. Ripley can see through the eyes of one marine at a time. They can either be given orders to proceed to a certain part of the complex, or they can actually be controlled as they battle against the savage monsters. The aliens move around the base, leaving their bio-mechanoid growths on the walls. Unless these are blasted off, the room starts to spawn face huggers and alien eggs.

The base is a maze of corridors and rooms. The rooms are connected by doors which can be locked, opened, sealed, or blown down. Once an alien is found, it must be destroyed quickly before it attacks. A few shots to the body, or a really accurate shot to the head usually does this job.

Success is achieved by destroying all of the aliens, to do this, Ripley must get to the Queens Chamber which is at the opposite end of the base. If this is done, and the Queen is killed, it is just a question of mopping up the remaining aliens and then moving on to the next wave.

While all of this is going on, you must also defend vital areas of the base. The Armoury is vital to your cause, as each member of the crew must periodically return there to charge up their smart gun. The Control room keeps the lighting going, and the General room keeps the power and lighting going. The aliens can evade the marines by leaving the base and moving around the base on the planet's surface. Your squad can't follow them as the planet's atmosphere is poisonous.

The top of the screen is taken up with a view of the room currently occupied by the crew member under control. The bottom half of the screen indicates the status of the members of the party. If the status bar is green, they're O.K., if yellow, they're tired or captured. Red indicates an injured or impregnated crewman - black indicates they're just plain dead.

If the aliens capture a crewman, they impregnate him with an alien egg. That is unless you can free him by killing all of the aliens that surround him (or her of course - there's no sexism in the space marines!).

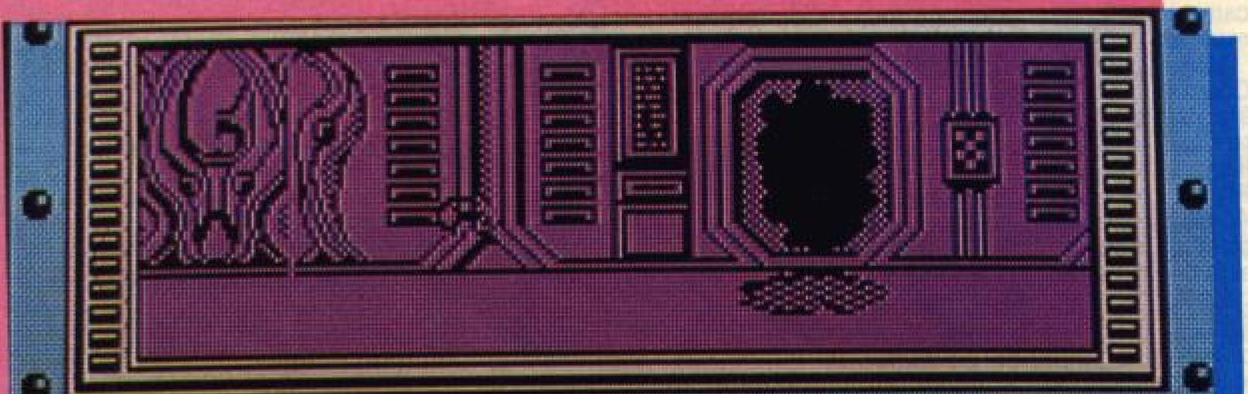
With over two hundred rooms, this game looks like being a tough combination of reflexes, planning and strategy.

ELECTRIC DREAMS plan to follow this up with *Big Trouble in Little China*. This is another film tie in, and the computer will feature three players which you control alternately. Wang Chi is a martial arts expert, so the player controls him when there's a bit of beating up to be done; Jack Burton is the All American Hero - with his 'Bushmaster' he cuts a swathe through the bad guys. When neither of these guys can cope, Egg Shen, the ancient magician steps forward and unleashes a mean spell or two.

The idea is, naturally, for this trio of butch brave people to rescue the helpless heroine from the evil clutches of the Mandarin Warlord. Fighting off Sewer Monsters, Wildmen, Warriors and Elementals. Our brave chums must delve deep into the meanies stronghold to rescue the heroine from the marriage chamber before she suffers a fate worse than death (and I don't mean going to a Smiths concert).




*It looks like curtains for Ripley as one of the aliens moves in, jaws agape*

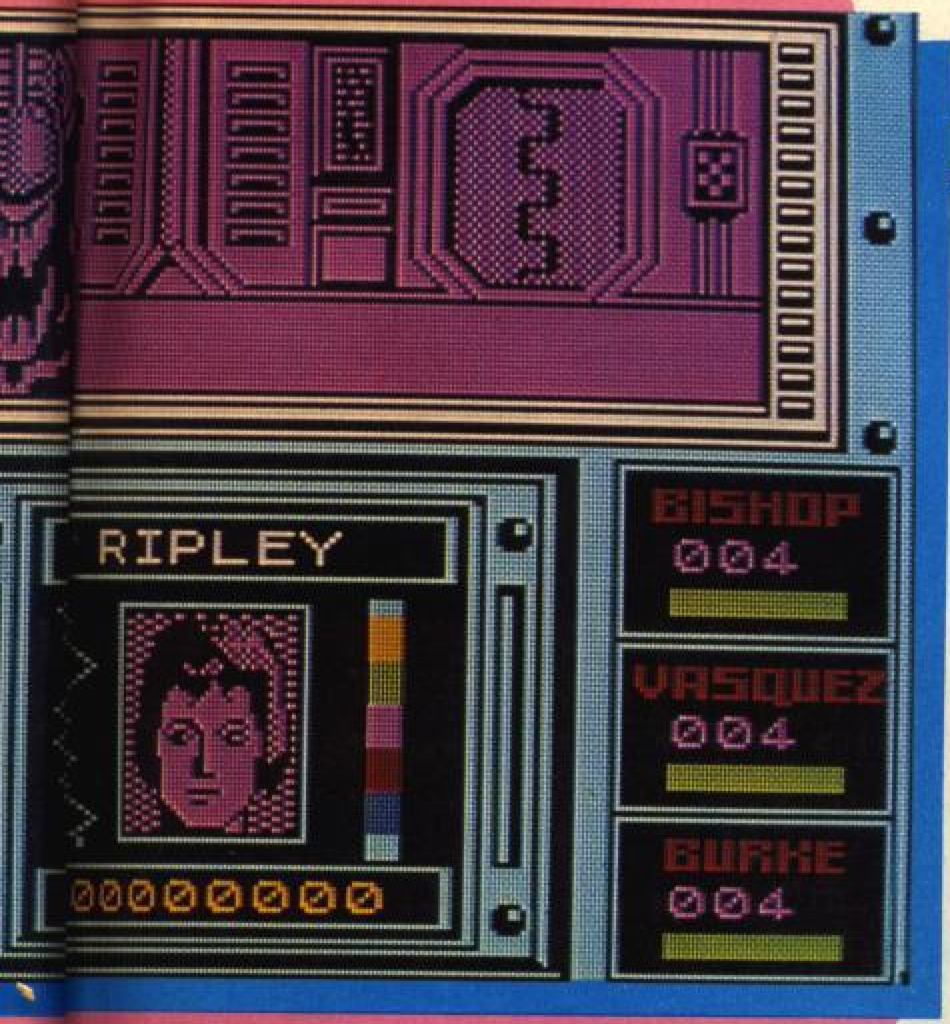


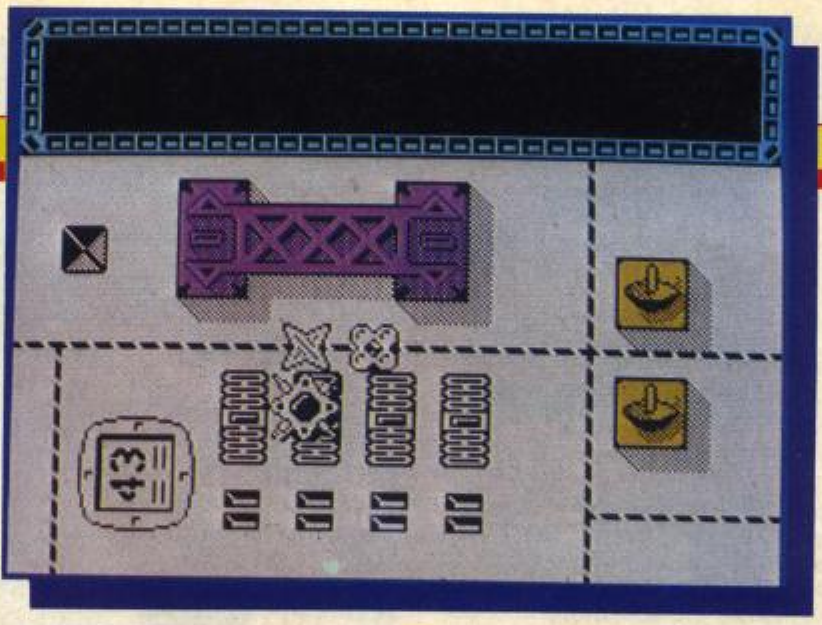

*Signs of Alien activity, Hicks finds a door broken through, with acid blood on the floor, and the walls covered in bio mech*




## COP THIS

The latest release from those jolly people at MIKROGEN is *Cop Out*, this was the featured game in the play-off for MIKROGEN's National Computer Games Championship. It's all about blasting away at the




## SKIMMING IN THE SHADOWS

*The skimmer approaches entry lift 43 to allow the skimmer to go to the lower level. The surface defences are closing in.*

Life aboard Earth megafreighter X111-7S-©50 is pretty routine stuff. The huge leviathan lumbers back and forth through space between the various trading stations, which in turn serve the far flung outposts of the great terran Galactic Empire. The few alien reaches which haven't been incorperated into the Empire as rather unequal partners have been ruthlessly exterminated.

So really, there's not a great deal to do. Fighter pilot and general all round wonderful person Mike Shadow really is kicking his heels round on of the many leisure and recreation centres, where the crew, bored out of their skulls, indulge in all manner of bizarre and highly dangerous sports just to break the monotony.

The only action out there are a few Orion pirates. But the automated ships defences take care of them, and the pirates usually try to pick on the smaller scout ships and the poor pickings of the smaller freighters further out. Just about the only time Mike gets to go for a spin in the old skimmer is when he's got to pop out to do a routine check for meteorite damage. Again, that's mostly automated, but the Captain is a bit of an odd ball and likes pilots to go out there and make double sure

But one day, Mike's out there on routine patrol. Then he finds the site of a meteorite impact. It's a chance in a million. It would have destroyed most ships, and even the mega freighter's automated repair system is going to take some time to sort it out. As he swoops down to get a closer look at the damage, there is a sudden blinding flash of light. Mike swerves and just avoids a stabbing laser bolt. The automated defences have come on! Mike tries to raise the local computer node, but with horror realises that it is that tangled mess of metal and meteorite debris below him. He realises that he is alone against the entire might of the megafreighter's defences. He must get back to the docking bay.

The odds look 'stacked against him. If he moves away from the surface, the laser cannon will get him. If he hugs the freighters skin, he won't get past the laser forcefields. The only hope is to use the narrow labyrinthine corridors just under the freighter's surface. The trouble is that these are the same corridors used by the defence system to feed its deadly arsenal to wherever danger threatens.

In two hundred screens of shoot-em-up action, Mike has to dodge between the surface and the inside of the ship in a bid to get back inside the ship before the automated defences swarm in. He must locate and destroy the force field generators which block his path. The defences are modeled along those of the human body, with antibodies and white cells which sense the presence of a foreign body and move towards it.

*Shadowskimmer* from THE EDGE should be around early in the new year and promises to be similar to *Uridium* but with more colour and detailed graphics. although it's flick screen rather than scrolling.




**Right at the beginning of level one, and the place is swarming with criminals**

hoodlums, gun runners and Bootleggers who've moved into your precinct.

This is police work made simple. No endless paperwork, no stakeouts or boring collection of evidence - you just get out the old Magnum .44 (equipped with amazo sights of course) and get blasting. The joint you bust is really jumping with hoods - six of them in all. To be fair, these guys don't have any qualms about blazing away at you. What makes things even trickier is that you're exposed on the open streets while the bad guys are all hiding behind walls and fences.

To stay alive, you've got to get your shots in at just the right time, just as the bad guys break cover and try to shoot you. If you're not content with just blowing away the bad guys, there are also plenty of birds fluttering around just in case you get bored. For some reason there is also a spinning bottle flying through the air, if you can manage to shoot this down you gain immunity from bullets for a while (why shooting a bottle should give you a bulletproof vest, only MIKRO-GEN know).

Each level is played against a time limit. All of the baddies must be shot before this time is up, or else it's curtains for you. There are ten levels in all, and the higher the level, the shorter the time limit. The cop is joystick controlled, and as he moves his gunsight moves with him. The sight moves slightly faster than the cop, which can make things quite tricky.

This is good harmless shoot-em-up fun, which should be ready for release around the end of the year.

# PREVIEW

## FRIENDS ROMANS, COUNTRYMEN

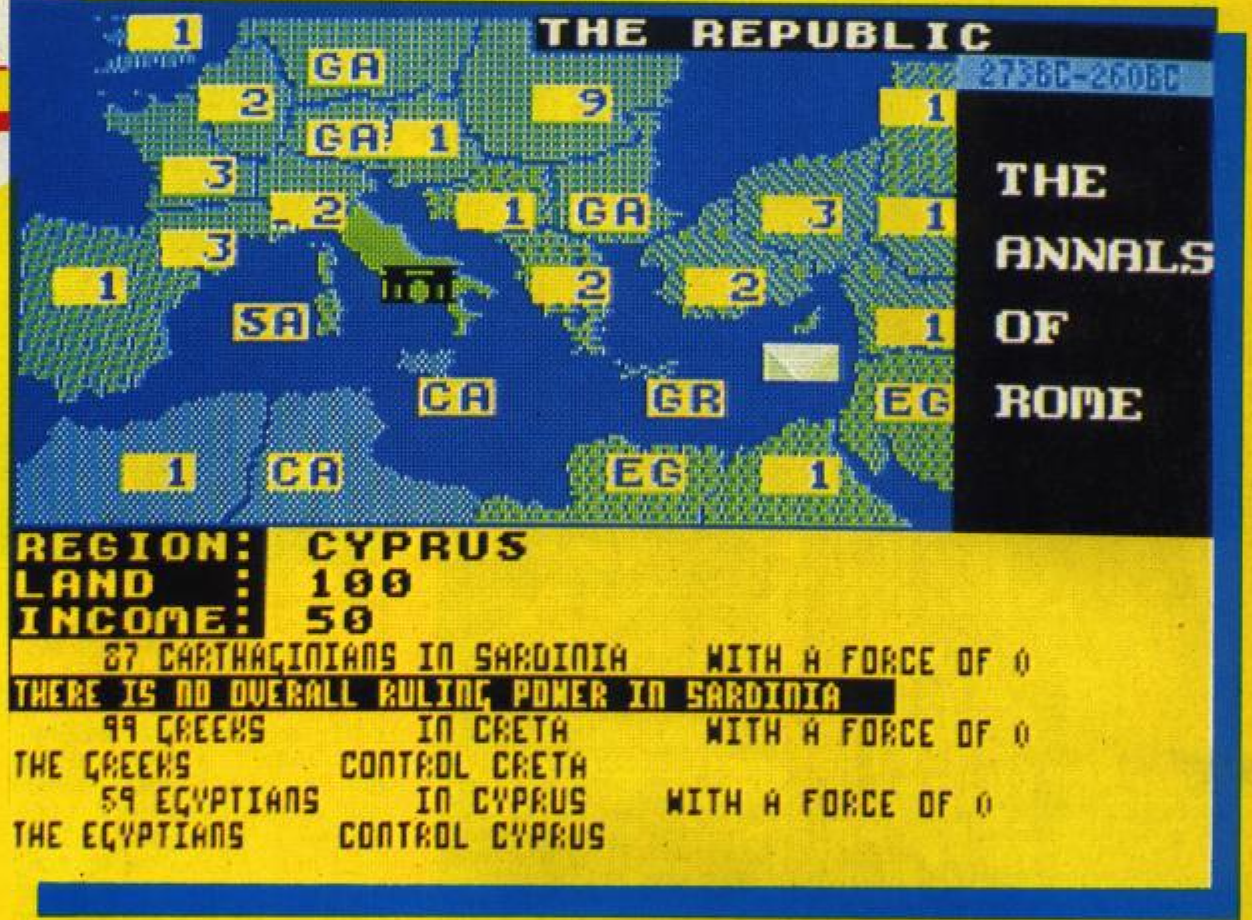
It is well known that things are pretty tough at the top. But, it isn't much fun at the bottom either. In PSS's latest strategy game, *Annals of Rome*, you are confronted with an awesome task - to forge the mighty Roman Empire no less.

The game opens in 273BC. By this time, the Romans had managed to establish a firm grip on the Italien mainland. So fa, so good. But out there are 13 different races of people, all hell bent on forging for themselves an empire.

The game takes place on a map showing the ancient worlds, basically southern and central Europe and the lands bordering the Mediteranean Sea. You play the leader of a faction in the Roman Senate. You must decide the tax rate, consider how much money to spend on military forces, who is to command them, and where they should be deployed.

There are 21 individual commanders at your disposal of varying competance and loyalty. It is up to you to decide where to deploy your commanders to ensure success. But of course, with so many rival powers surrounding Rome, there is a constant danger of invasion, so players must try to ensure that a fair number of troops are left back in Rome to defend it against marauding Barbarians. Should an invasion succeed, and then go on to sack Rome, needless to say, you won't be terribly popular. Worse still, some of your commanders might decide to rebel, if they see you making a hash of things, and then civil war will break out. This makes things even worse, as men are withdrawn from the legions to try to keep order and defeat such revolutions.

Once again, PSS has come up with a new angle in strategy games. Can you build the Roman Empire, or will you too be washed away in the sands of time.




*An early stage in the game. The other powers are active at the moment, fighting amongst themselves*




## FOOTBALL CRAZY

Can you rise to the dizzy heights of football stardom, or are you destined to spend your career languishing in division four playing for the Penge Plodders

With *Footballer of the Year* from GREMLIN GRAPHICS, you can find out if you've got what it takes to get to the top of the game. The object of the game is to win the award of "Footballer of the Year". Fortunately you don't have to make a coy, modest acceptance speech thanking your manager, your team mates, your mum and dad, your pet budgie and the office tea boy.

According to Greg Holmes, one of the programmers working on the project at GREMLIN, it is a strategy game with arcade elements. Quite a change of direction for the GREMLIN team, who are normally to be found designing games to kill and maim with. Come to think of it, it isn't really that big a step from that to a game about professional football.

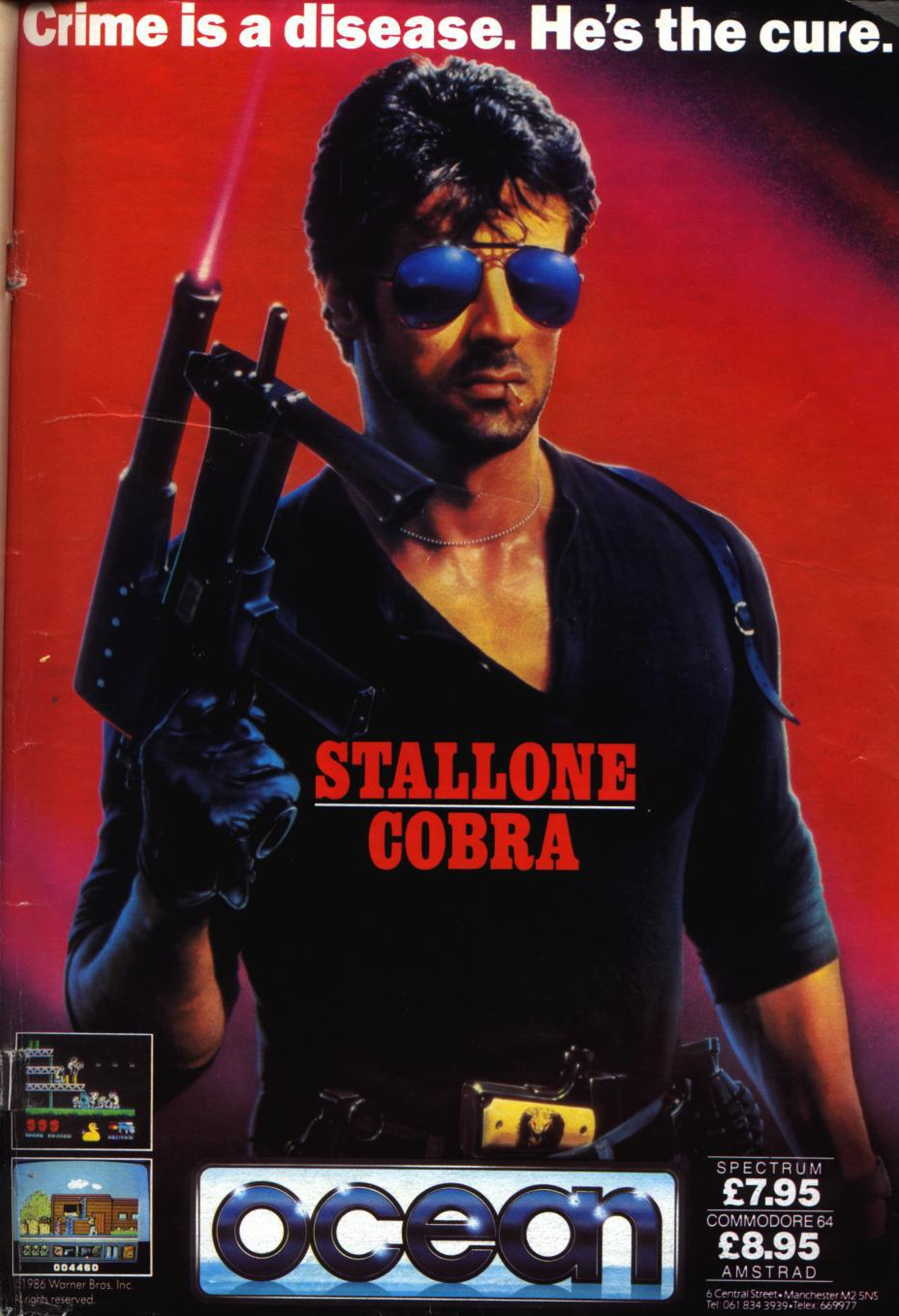
To achieve your aim, you first pick the team you want to play for. This is a bit like selecting a skill level. If you decide to play for Liverpool, then obviously you will either be a star overnight, or end up languishing on the subs bench in no time. To work your way up the scale, you must slowly develop your skills. Then, when the time is right, apply for a transfer. A scout will then turn up from another club, and if you're the sort of thing they're looking for, they'll take you.

The game is icon driven, and the player has to make a lot of decisions on what to buy to improve his skill. Skill is reflected in a rating which changes depending on your performance in various competitions. Your wages are affected by your rating and the club you're playing for, so obviously they'll go up as you move slowly up the rankings. But likewise, getting promotion and succeeding in the big clubs will cost more money

It'll be out at the beginning of December, and will set you back £7.95.

*The status screen at the beginning of the game. You've got to pile up the points to get to the top of the pile*




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